HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS OF CENTRAL LABOR UNIONS

BY

WILLIAM MAXWELL BURKE, A.M.,

Sometime University Fellow in Political Economy and Finance

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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1899

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PREFACE.

THIS investigation of Central Labor Unions was suggested by Dr. Thomas N. Carver, of Oberlin College, and was begun under his direction. It was finished at Columbia University, where original sources of information are more accessible.

The sources of the material are of necessity almost wholly original, and consist of:

1st. An almost complete set of constitutions and by-laws of Central Labor Unions in the United States, as well as several of those in England.

2d. Reports of proceedings of the American Federation of Labor, and pamphlets published by that organization.

3d. Reports of the Trades Union Congress of England.

4th. Answers to circulars addressed to Secretaries of all Central Labor Unions in the United States.

5th. Personal observation in the Central Labor Unions of Cleveland, Ohio, and New York City.

6th. Personal interviews and correspondence with prominent labor leaders and officials of Central Labor Unions in Cleveland, New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, Toledo, Boston, and several other large cities.

7th. Newspaper clippings and files of newspapers.

The books which refer to the subject of Central Labor Unions are very few in number, and the references are merely incidental. For England, Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *History of Trade Unionism* and *Industrial Democracy*, and George Howell's *The Conflicts of Labor and Capital*

and *Trade Unionism, New and Old,* constitute almost the whole of the literature on the subject. For the United States literature is not more abundant, and is greatly inferior in point of accuracy and detail. It consists of Ely's *Labor Movement in America;* McNeill's *The Labor Movement the Problem of To-day,* and Powderly's *Thirty Years of Labor.*

Thanks are due, and gladly given, to the Secretaries of the various Central Labor Unions, and especially to the delegates of the New York Central Labor Union, who have in many ways kindly aided in the preparation of this dissertation.

WILLIAM MAXWELL BURKE.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, *June, 1899.*

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THE HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS OF CENTRAL LABOR UNIONS

CHAPTER I.

Part I. Labor Federations in England.

The Central Labor Union, while it is not the very latest form of federation, is a type of that form of labor organization which for the last thirty years has grown into great favor with trades unionists in England and America. It is well, then, before we begin the study of the Central Labor Union, to see what has been done in the way of federations, amalgamations, and affiliations of labor unions which have grown with such rapidity and consolidated into such immense organizations.

It has been pointed out by some writers that these terms, federation, amalgamation, and affiliation, have unfortunately been used interchangeably. The different societies which bear the names seem to have no very clear idea as to the differences, if any, between them; and we have societies of practically the same formation, constituents, and administration called amalgamations as well as federations. John Jarrett, president of The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, writing in 1887, said: "These different unions were *federated* in 1876, forming the present great organization known as the *Amalgamated* Association of Iron and Steel Workers of the United States."[1] All constituent unions of the American Federation of Labor are said to be

[1] *The Labor Movement, the Problem of To-day*, page 268.

affiliated, while the Knights of Labor organization, in which all local assemblies and district assemblies are subordinate to the General Assembly, is spoken of as a federation of labor.

If one can judge at all from the use of words in the labor literature of the United States, there is practically no difference in these terms. Theoretically, however, there is quite a wide difference, and as misunderstandings might arise, it is best to define the words, and then to use them in the sense defined. Amalgamation, in the labor world, means that form of industrial association which ensues when two or more organizations cease to exist as separate societies and are merged into one, with a single set of officers, a common purse, and one executive. National trade unions are examples of this form of association. Federation, on the other hand, means the binding together of societies, which still preserve their autonomy, into one organization for the mutual benefit of all. This binding together is on the *quid pro quo* basis, where the constituent unions relinquish certain rights and receive certain advantages. The American Federation of Labor is the one great example of this kind of combination in the United States.

Mr. Webb says that "Amalgamations and Federations, being definitely limited to similar or related and interdependent trade, are, in idea, essentially Trade Unions."[1] As Mr. Webb is speaking only of conditions in England, this may be true; but even then he must except the Trades Councils, the members of which are not limited to similar, related, or interdependent trades, while he admits they are federations. In the United States it is certainly not true, for in the American Federation of Labor we find wood carvers and hod carriers, which are surely not related or interdependent. Ever since 1875, the Trades Union Congress of Great Britain has

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, page 103.

been trying to organize a *Federation of Trades*, and this does not mean a federation of similar related or interdependent trades, but a federation in which all trade unions shall be eligible to membership. The Cotton Spinners' Federation was more of an amalgamation, according to Mr. Webb's idea, for the constituent unions were of one craft or crafts which are very closely allied. An affiliation, finally, is a very loose form of federation, easily entered into and easily broken. The federations of the various American cities are at present perhaps the only cases of this sort of organization, although some of these belong more correctly to the second class.

Both in England and the United States the labor movement resolves itself into two almost identical periods of time. Before 1866 we hear little in either country of national federations of labor, and since that time the history of the movement is, in the main, a history of attempts, more or less successful, to establish national amalgamations or federations. This is particularly true of the United States.

Whether we believe with Howell that trades unions are the direct successors of the old craft guilds, or with Mr. and Mrs. Webb that their origin cannot be traced directly to these guilds, we know that it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that the modern trade union began to flourish and to grow in strength and numbers. It was not very long after this new growth among working men, that we find evidences of a greater ambition and a groping after greater strength. This was thought to be found in some sort of combination among the different trade unions for moral and financial help. If unions of workingmen were helpful, it was suggested to some that unions of workingmen's unions would be helpful also.

Perhaps the earliest recorded attempt at a general union was suggested by Mr. John Gast, in 1818, who advocated a

general workman's organization, as distinguished from separate trade clubs.[1] Some time before 1825, Gast formed a Committee of Trades Delegates, which was the first attempt to organize a federation of labor unions that finally developed into the Trades Council. There are of these in England now about one hundred and thirty-four.

In the United States these unions are known by various names, among which are: "City Federation," "Trades Alliance," "Trades Council," "Workingmen's Union," "Workingmen's Assembly," "Trade and Labor Alliance," but most commonly of all they are known as "Central Labor Unions."

This organization in London, known as the "Committee of Trades Delegates," consisted of two delegates from each of the London trade unions. It was a powerful support to the workingmen in their fight against the Combination Laws. Just when it was organized, or how or when it died, is not known.[2] We know nothing of the administration or the methods of this body; in fact about all that is known is that it existed. This, however, is important because, although there had been loose federal organizations among unions in the same craft for twenty-five years, there had been no attempt to combine unions of different crafts or trades. At about the same time and for the same purpose—to prevent the re-enactment of the Combination Laws against workmen —similar committees were formed in Manchester, Glasgow, Sheffield, and Newcastle. After the repeal of the Combination Laws, when the bill allowing trade societies to exist for the purpose of regulating wages or hours of labor had passed the House of Commons, the master ship-builders circulated a handbill at the door of the House, in which they insisted "at any rate that all federal or combined action among Trade Clubs should be prohibited." This would go to show that

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, page 76, note.

[2] It was represented at the Conference in London in 1845.

whether or not there had been combined action among the trades prior to 1824, the manufacturers feared such action.

We hear again of the "United Trades" of London, Manchester, Sheffield, Norwich, Hull, Bristol, Rochdale, and Yarmouth sending delegates to a convention held in London in Easter, 1845, for the purpose of forming a National Federation of Trades. Whether the United Trades Society of London was a continuation of, or direct successor to, the Committee of Delegates of 1825, cannot be determined; but it is altogether likely that from the latter date to the present London has not been without a society which would correspond to the present Trades Council. Since 1848, in particular, these Committees have been especially active. In 1855, one of them included eighty-seven unions, and represented forty-eight thousand men. In Glasgow, these delegate Committees were in almost continual existence until the founding of the present Trades Council in that city. The Committees were in general organized for particular purposes, and not as a continuous body. While they did not exercise all the functions of a Trades Council, yet in their formation as delegate bodies, receiving delegates from unions existing in a single town or district, they closely resemble a Trades Council. Mr. Webb does not recognize these Committees as Trades Councils, for he says that there were none in England prior to 1848.[1]

In 1848 there was formed in Liverpool a Trades Guardian Association, almost the sole object of which was to protect trades unions from suppression by the use of criminal law on the part of the employers.[2] From 1850 to 1857 little is known of this society, but in the latter year it subscribed nearly $2,000 to the Liverpool Cabinet Makers. It was reorganized in 1861 upon the model of the London Trades

[1] *History of Trade Unionism*, page 225.

[2] *Ibid.*, pages 225, 226, note.

Council. The Trades Council of Sheffield was established in 1857 under the name of "Association of Organized Trades," and had a special object. Dublin and Bristol had almost constantly some kind of Council of the local trades; Manchester had a species of Central Union before 1854. From 1858 to 1867 about twelve Councils were organized.

In December, 1818, John Gast suggested the formation of a National Trades Union. His idea embraced a General Committee of delegates from each trade, a centralization of funds and a contribution of a penny per week. In 1819 this organization was spoken of as an accomplished fact, with Gast as president. It was, however, never heard of afterwards. In 1826 a union was organized at Manchester, but did not extend very far or live very long. The first federation which was of practical value to trade unionists was conceived and founded by John Doherty, an officer of the Cotton Spinners' Union. This was to be a national association to which all trades would be eligible. Doherty called a meeting of delegates at Manchester, in February, 1830, and after five months the National Association for the Protection of Labor was formed. "Its object was to resist reductions but not to strike for advances."[1] The initiation fee for societies was one pound, together with a shilling for each member, and the dues were a penny a week. Not long after the society was established, the membership rose to one hundred and fifty unions. There were represented the textile trades, mechanics, moulders, blacksmiths, and even agricultural laborers. It contributed the so-called "strike pay" and helped in the work of organization.[2] This "National Association," it is said, at one time represented one hundred thousand workmen, and its official organ, *The Voice of the People*, had a circulation of thirty thousand, although it was

[1] *History of Trade Unionism*, page 106.

[2] "Labor Federations," *The Economic Journal*, vol. iv., page 408.

stamped weekly and was sold at the price of seven pence. About the end of the year 1831, this first really national federation came to an end. It is not recorded what caused its downfall, but Mr. Webb thinks that its leading spirit, Doherty, quarrelled with the executive committee, and *The Voice of the People* died.

The next federal union to appear was one of the building trades, organized some time before 1832. In 1834 it consisted of six thousand seven hundred and seventy-four members.[1] Each local union was strictly autonomous and was governed by its own by-laws, which were subject to the general rules adopted at an annual delegate meeting. Besides the constitution and code there was an elaborate ritual, and provision was made for many weird performances at the initiation of members. The first fight of the union was against the system of contracting in vogue among the Liverpool employers. Mr. Edwards says that "during this period the building trades were better organized in England than they have ever been since."[2]

The Grand National Consolidated Trades-Union was organized, existed for two or three years, and collapsed in 1836. The principal reason of its downfall was the great prevalence of strikes during the years 1833–35. Robert Owen was one of the chief spirits of this union, and it was owing largely to his activity that it grew with that marvellous rapidity which has since been equalled only by the growth of the Knights of Labor during the few years prior to 1887. Grievous difficulties immediately beset this great federation; large numbers of workmen were locked out merely for joining, or in some cases for refusing to leave the union. All these workmen had to be supported, and the finances of the union were not able to stand the strain. The

[1] *History of Trade Unionism*, page 111.

[2] *The Economic Journal*, vol. iv., page 409.

executive in 1834 ordered a levy of a shilling per head to help the fifteen hundred members who had been turned out by the employers at Derby. This "turn out," together with the strike of the gas-stokers of London, which put at least part of the city in darkness, turned the people against the union. The Government was frightened at this manifestation of the dreaded power of the trades union, and began at once to devise legislative measures against it. Nassau Senior, the economist, was invited to advise the cabinet and made a report in which he suggested certain remedial legislation. According to his scheme, all solicitations, combinations, subscriptions, and solicitations to subscriptions were to be prohibited under severe penalties. If this should prove insufficient for the purpose, confiscation of union funds deposited in savings banks was recommended.

The alarm of the Government and of the whole country culminated in the monstrous sentence of seven years' transportation of six Dorchester laborers. Mr. Edwards, in a recent article on "Labor Federations,"[1] is evidently mistaken when he says that these six laborers were members of the National Association for Protection of Labor and that it aided in securing their release. The Association was not heard of after 1832, and the trial occurred in March, 1834.[2] Its place was taken by the Grand Consolidated Trades Union. What Edwards says of the former society was true of the latter. The demonstration of protest which this society organized is said to have been attended by more than four hundred thousand people. A committee of fifty thousand persons waited upon Lord Melbourne and presented a petition signed by two hundred and sixty-six thousand persons.[3] After five years of work and agitation

[1] *The Economic Journal*, 1893.

[2] *History of Trade Unionism*, page 110.

[3] *The Economic Journal*, vol. iii., page 408.

a committee of London workmen—probably from what then was the Trades Council—succeeded in having the men pardoned and brought home.

In 1834 there occurred a series of disastrous strikes and lock-outs which compelled the Grand Consolidated to levy an assessment of eighteen pence on its members; as a consequence, much dissatisfaction was felt. This, together with a vigorous "presentation of the document," the signing of which would prevent the worker from having anything to do with unions, gradually broke up the first great federal union. As Mr. Webb says, "there is no date when it was dissolved, but it gradually faded away."

There appears to have been no national federation of trade unions after the dissolution of the Grand National until in 1845. The new federation was suggested by the United Trades of Sheffield, which was the forerunner of the Trades Council. The Secretary of the United Trades drew up the proposals which were then laid before the leading London unions. A committee was formed in London, and at Easter, 1845, one hundred and ten delegates assembled in London. Here there were delegates from the United Trade Societies of eight cities, London, Manchester, Sheffield, Norwich, Hull, Bristol, Rochdale, and Yarmouth. The result of this conference was the formation of two associations. The first, The National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labor, undertook the functions of a federation of to-day, *i. e.*, labor disputes and legislation, while the other society, The National United Trades Association for the Employment of Labor, was organized for the purpose of co-operative industry. The latter did not prove successful, and in 1848 the two Associations were merged into one. The co-operative feature was not abandoned, but the Association needed more capital and made an attempt to raise it. In this year the

President and most active worker resigned, and in 1849 a prolonged strike and the accompanying litigation ruined the finances of the union and started its decline, which culminated about 1860. This was the longest-lived of any general federation of trade unions in England. The reasons for its long life appear to be three:

1st. The dues were higher, thus enabling the Association to make longer and better fights while continuing "strike pay."

2d. It had little or nothing to do with politics, considering that one thing was enough at a time.

3d. Its officers were more cautious, and, on the whole, more able than those of previous associations.

During the years from 1861 to 1866 the chief movement in the English trade union world was the rise of the Trades Councils. Most of the energy of organization spent itself here, and nothing was attempted in the way of a National Federation.

PERIOD SINCE 1866.

In 1866, however, the federation spirit again seemed strong and a delegate conference was held at Sheffield. There were assembled one hundred and thirty-eight delegates, representing about two hundred thousand workmen.[1] A committee was appointed to draft a set of rules which were to be submitted to the local societies prior to the next Trade Conference. The reason given in the preamble to these rules for the formation of a national federation was the growing prevalence of lock-outs. Although no attempt was made to define a lock-out, it was said that the chief incentive to the formation of the federation was the determination to fight the employers who used this weapon. This finally led the organization into trouble; for no one

[1] *History of Trade Unionism*, page 240.

could tell what disputes were to be supported. Dues were not paid regularly and some locals were constantly behind; the Executive Council was, as a result, very much hampered in its work. The United Kingdom Alliance of Organized Trades lasted but four years and died because constituent unions kept falling away. This was the last successful attempt to establish a national federation in England.

In spite of the fact that a national federation of trade unions has just been formed in England, a strong, permanent federation of unions of different trades is not likely to exist in England for a long time to come, if ever. Strong national trade unions are loth to admit men of other crafts to a share in their government. They prefer a federation of the allied trade unions into a national, and to fight their battles for themselves. Experience, too, has demonstrated that organizations of this kind are much more successful than general federal unions, as, for example, the organization of the Engineers, the Building Trades, and the Printing Trades. These organizations have proved their usefulness and permanence, and would probably consent to a federal union only if a solid system of finance were the foundation, and then only on the conditions of a very loose bond and a strict autonomy. These national trade unions of England, although they form probably the most important part of the trade union movement at present, are not generally federations and need not be studied here. Federations of allied trades do come, in a way, under the head we are studying. As we wish, however, to deal primarily with Central Labor Unions, which are federations of unions not necessarily allied, we shall consider the history of those only which approximate to that type.

Some of the functions of a national federation are exercised by what is known as the Parliament of Labor, or the Trades Union Congress. As far as legislation goes, this

body does all that a federation could do, but into other fields it does not enter. This organization, like the great American Federation, owes its existence to the Trades Councils.[1] There had been a conference of the trade union delegates summoned by the Glasgow Trades, and held in London in 1864; but this, as well as its successor summoned by the Sheffield Trades Council in 1867, was a congress with a special mission, and led to no continuous organization.

In April, 1868, however, the Manchester and Salford Trades Council issued a circular calling for an Industrial Congress, which was held the following year for the first time. The circular, which is to be found in an appendix to Webb's *History of Trade Unionism*, laid stress particularly on the necessity for effort by working classes to prevent legislation adverse to their interests. Delegates were awaited from Trades Councils, Federations of Trades, and Trade Societies in general. It was also expected that the Congress would follow the methods of the Social Science Association, from which, says the circular, "the artisan class is almost excluded."

Thirty-four delegates answered this call, and claimed to represent one hundred and eighteen thousand union workmen. The next year the number of constituents was more than doubled. Not until the Congress of 1871, however, did the real leaders of trade unionism join the new movement, and in the next meeting, in 1872, three hundred and seventy-five thousand workingmen were represented. It was not until 1871 that the Trade Union Congress became more than a large debating society.

The Trade Union Congress is the only body in England which approaches, in organization or functions, the general federation as it exists in the United States. Its organization is almost wholly in the hands of the Parliamentary Com-

[1] *History of Trade Unionism*, page 264, note.

mittee, which was first appointed in 1871. The president is elected by the delegates after they have met, preferably from among the delegates of the town where the Congress is held. The chairman of the Parliamentary Committee is to be vice-president, and the secretary and treasurer of the Parliamentary Committee fill similar offices for the Congress. The Parliamentary Committee is composed of thirteen members, including the secretary, who receives a salary of three hundred pounds. Its duties are as follows:[1]

First. To watch all legislation affecting labor.

Second. To initiate such legislation as the Congress may direct.

Third. To prepare the program for the Congress.

Fourth. To act as a credential committee for the Congress.

Fifth. To constitute a committee of harmony with power to suspend for two years.

With this Committee seems to rest all the executive power of the association, while it is the means of doing practically all the work for which the Trades Union Congress exists. We say, practically all, for beyond passing resolutions, and debating all kinds of political, industrial, and educational questions, the Congress exists only to advance the interests of trade unionism through legislative action. Unlike the American Federation of Labor, all business is transacted by the whole body of delegates without reference to special committees. As the Congress grows in numbers from year to year, this is a decided disadvantage. Valuable time is needlessly spent in discussing points when there is no practical disagreement—although in this case the president has power to end the discussion. The difficulty has been met, in part, by revising the constitution so as to limit more strictly the number of delegates sent to the Congress. The basis of representation is one delegate for each two thousand mem-

[1] *Reports of Proceedings of the Trades Union Congress.*

bers or fraction thereof, provided they pay one pound for each one thousand or fraction thereof, and ten shillings for each delegate attending.[1] On this basis four hundred and six delegates attended the Congress of 1897, which would make the number of union men represented eight hundred and twelve thousand, while as a matter of fact, about a million and a quarter were represented. A delegate meeting of four hundred and six workingmen is rather unwieldy, especially where all business must be transacted without the use of special committees. The last motion to restrict the number of delegates was voted down, because, as a certain delegate said, "We are going very well; let well alone."

At almost every meeting of the Trades Union Congress since 1873, a motion in some way looking toward a National federation has been presented and voted on. The view has generally been held that such a federation was necessary. Little or nothing, however, came of the resolutions until a special congress was called for 1890, at Manchester, to consider this subject fully.[2]

The work of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress has been eminently successful in securing the abolition of antiquated and unjust laws unfavorable to workmen, and the enactment of many laws which afford them greater justice and safety. They have accomplished in England that for which the American workmen have as yet striven in vain: the abolition of conspiracy laws, as relating to labor disputes. It has not been many years since a prominent labor union in the United States ordered its minute-books burned because an indictment for conspiracy was feared, on account of the declaration of a boycott; while it is no uncommon thing to hear our judges declaring boycotts to be conspiracies, and punishing those interested in

[1] Since 1895 Trades Councils have been excluded.

[2] Report of Proceedings of the Trades Union Congress.

declaring the boycott. For nearly a century the trade unionists of England fought such laws, until, largely through the efforts of the Parliamentary Committee, they were finally abolished.

PART II. LABOR FEDERATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.

The labor union history of the United States, prior to 1866, is mainly a history of local unions and national trade associations.

By a national trade association is meant an organization which includes among its members workers in but a single craft, or, at most, the workers in crafts which are very closely allied. Examples of this kind of organization are the International Typographical Union, founded in 1850, and the Hatters, who had a national organization in 1854. None of these national unions founded before the Civil War were federations, or attempts at federations. The federation idea was started in America as in England, not on a national basis, but with districts very much smaller. The local union, the foundation of all federations, amalgamations, and associations, did not appear in America before 1803, when we find that the New York Society of Journeymen-Shipwrights was incorporated on April 3.[1] The House Carpenters of New York City also were organized and incorporated in 1806, as were the Tailors. The aims of these unions at this early date, were the shortening of the daily labor time, and an increase in wages. They also took a more or less prominent part in the co-operative and socialistic experiments of the first half of the century.

The first form of labor federation which we find in the United States is a union of the local trade unions in the larger cities. It will be remembered that in England also the first form of alliance between trade unions was the

[1] Ely, *Labor Movement in America*, page 38.

delegate trades committees of the larger towns, which finally developed into the trades councils, and which have had a large share in the labor movement of England since 1845. The first of these Trade Delegate Committees in England was organized some years before we hear of anything similar in this country.

On December second, 1833, there appeared in one of the daily papers of New York,[1] an advertisement pertaining to the proposed procession of the "General Trades Union." In this order of procession, as there given, we learn that the following unions constituted the General Trades Union of New York City: Typographical Union, Journeymen House Carpenters, Book-binders, Leather Dressers, Coopers, Carvers and Gilders, Bakers, Cabinet Makers, Cord Wainers —men, Cord Wainers—women, Tailors, Tailors of Brooklyn, Silk Hatters, Stone Cutters, Tin-plate and Sheet-iron Workers, Type-founders, Hat-finishers, Willow-basket Makers, Chair Makers and Gilders, Sail Makers, and Block and Pump Makers. The route of the procession was given; Robert Townsend, Jr., was Grand Marshal and James McBeatty and John H. Bowie, Secretaries. The address was by the President, Ely Moore, who afterwards, during Jackson's second term, became the first labor representative in Congress.

In the *Courier and New York Inquirer* of the next day, we find an editorial which gives the date of the founding of the society, as well as some comments on the society and the address. The General Trades Union was instituted in August, 1833. In this general meeting there were the twenty-one charter societies above named, and four thousand persons, most of them constituents. The editor says: "We observed not a single individual who was not hand-

[1] *Morning Courier and New York Advertiser.*

somely dressed, the utmost harmony, order and sobriety, having characterized the whole proceedings of the day."

In President Moore's speech we learn the objects of this General Trades Union. "To guard against the encroachments of aristocracy, to preserve our natural and political rights, to elevate our moral and intellectual condition and promote our pecuniary interest, to narrow the line of distinction between journeymen and employer, to establish honor and safety of our respective vocations upon a more secure and permanent basis, and to alleviate the distresses of those suffering from want of employment." The right of laborers to combine for the protection of their interests is vigorously maintained, and the position is taken that the General Trades Union will diminish the number of strikes and lockouts, and not increase them, as their opponents had claimed. The extracts from the constitution, quoted to prove this, are as follows: "Each trade or art may represent to the convention, through their delegate, their grievances, who shall take cognizance thereof and decide upon the same." "No trade or art shall strike for higher wages than they at present receive, without the sanction of the Convention."[1]

On January 8, 1834, about one month after the meeting of the General Trades Union of New York City, the General Trades Union of Boston was formed. A circular containing the plan of organization was sent to the different "locals," and sixteen unions responded. In March a constitution was adopted, and afterwards ratified by the local unions. The anniversary of Independence Day, 1834, was celebrated under the auspices of this General Trades Union. Frederick Robinson, of Marblehead, delivered the oration in the open air on Fort Hill. In one of the toasts, our "Brethren of New York," this sentiment was indulged in: "They have struck the first blow at oppression: may success attend, and pros-

[1] *Labor Movement in America*, page 44.

perity crown all their lawful undertakings."[1] This General Trades Union was still active in 1847, and had an official organ called the *Workingman's Advocate*, published by Mr. Evans.[2]

About the same time, the Baltimore Trades Council was heard from in a memorial which it addressed to Congress, praying that Congress should limit the hours of those employed in public works to ten hours a day. "The memorial was brought up in Congress March 2, 1836, and after a short debate was tabled."[3] Again, in 1850, the workingmen of Baltimore succeeded in carrying a bill through the House of Delegates of Maryland, making ten hours a legal day's labor, but providing for special contracts.[4] This was undoubtedly due to the presence in Baltimore of a Central Labor Union. Outside of a very few cities like New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, little or nothing, however, was done in the work of federating the different local unions of the various cities, until about the end of the Civil War. Although this was the earliest form of federation for unions in different trades, the movement for many years after its inception seems not to have taken a very firm root, or to have become very widespread until after the foundation of the Knights of Labor, and of the American Federation of Labor.

The first association of laborers embracing a larger district than the city was the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Laborers, whose first meeting was held in Boston in 1832.[5] Of this meeting there is left no account, but of the second meeting, also held in Boston, we have a very good report, preserved in the First Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor. Seventeen delegates from all the New England States ex-

[1] McNeill, *The Labor Movement, the Problem of To-day*, page 83.

[2] *Ibid.*, page 109. [3] *Ibid.*, page 87. [4] *Ibid.*, page 117. [5] *Ibid.*, page 78.

cept Vermont attended. Who or what those delegates represented is not stated; that most of them were delegates from local trade unions is evident from the fact that the question arose whether the association should make the adoption of the ten-hour system indispensable, or leave it to the discretion of the various associations.

The meeting considered the expediency of a national convention of workingmen, as well as the question of further organization throughout New England, with a Central Committee for each State. Here we see for the first time suggested and considered two ideas which have been realized to such an extent during the last thirty years. What action was taken, or what were the results, we do not learn. After the Convention of 1834 we lose all trace of this association. Eleven years later another labor association was formed in New England, called the New England Workingmen's Association. This was not a federation, but merely a larger association of the mechanics and workingmen of New England. The object of the association was declared to be "Union for power, power to bless humanity." Up to this time it was the largest association of workingmen in the United States.

In the same year, 1845, the first National Industrial Congress was convened in New York. Delegates appeared from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, Kentucky, Michigan, and Virginia.[1] The plans of the Industrial Convention included: First: The establishment of a society to be called the *Industrial Brotherhood*, to be composed of associations of actual producers upon a plan of mutual insurance similar to the "Odd Fellows," and with the additional object of political action. Second: An annual industrial congress, to be composed of representatives of the Industrial Brotherhood and all societies having the same political aim. The Indus-

[1] *Young America*, G. H. Evans, editor, October 18, 1845.

trial Congress continued to meet annually for four or five years, after which period nothing is heard of it.

From about 1850 till the close of the Civil War was a period of autonomous trade organizations on a national basis, while little energy was spent devising or perfecting federations of any kind. The International Typographical Union, 1850, the National Trade Association of Hat Finishers, 1854, the Iron Moulders' Union of North America, 1859, and the Machinists' and Blacksmiths' Union of North America were all organized during this period.

Professor Ely says: "It is stated that twenty-six trades had national organizations in 1860."[1] This error is repeated in the form of a definite statement by J. L. M. King.[2] After careful investigation we cannot find one-half of that number of trades having a national organization before 1860. In fact, Mr. P. J. McGuire, in his *Sketch of the Growth, Benefits and Achievements of National and International Trade Unions of America*, gives but five national trade unions founded before 1860.

That five such unions were founded in ten years is evidence of special thought and agitation in this particular direction. This is doubtless the reason why there was no effort at a general federation for more than ten years after the Industrial Congress had ceased to meet. The Civil War now ensued, and with a great army of productive laborers turned into a great army of non-productive consumers there was not that need for labor unions, either local or national, which had hitherto been felt. When the war ended, however, and the soldiers again turned to the arts of peace, the labor market was crowded and wages were in great danger of falling. As a result a new impetus was given to the organization of labor. One of the first things which strikes our

[1] *Labor Movement in America*, page 60.

[2] *The Journal of Political Economy*, volume v, page 206.

attention at this time is the revival of a desire for a national organization on the lines of a federation.

In 1866, the central unions or trades assemblies of New York and Baltimore issued a call for a national labor congress, and on August 20th of the same year one hundred delegates, representing sixty-one labor organizations, met in Baltimore. Among these organizations were international, national, and local unions. Political, industrial, and social questions were discussed, the principal topic being the eight hour system. A national organization, called the National Labor Union, was formed, and the next year more than two hundred delegates attended its congress held in Chicago. In 1868, two conventions were held—one in May, at Pittsburg, and the other in September, at New York. The latter convention was called principally for the purpose of discussing the general movement for an eight-hour day. Here it was proposed by the president to make all unions subordinate to a central power; but no action was taken on the suggestion.

Nothing of particular importance happened in the conventions of 1869, '70, and '71, which met in Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia, respectively. In 1872, when the convention met in Columbus, Ohio, the union felt called upon to enter actively into the political arena, and nominated David Davis, of Illinois, for President of the United States. This was a death-blow to the National Union; for local unions one by one withdrew from an organization which was entering upon a course contrary to their recognized principles.[1]

In 1873 trades unions, like everything else that depended upon industrial activity for support, went to the wall in the financial panic. Wages now began to fall rapidly, and the most intelligent of trade unionists thought that it would be possible to stem the tide by forming a new national organi-

[1] P. J. McGuire, *The American Federation of Labor—its History and Aims.*

zation, and to avoid in it the mistakes of the former one. Hence, on a personal call, delegates assembled at Rochester, New York, April 4, 1874. A constitution was adopted, but the organization had no life. In 1875, at Tyrone, Pa., another convention met with a like fate.[1] In 1878, however, there seems to have been a more healthy growth of trades unions, principally because the local unions were founded on a more substantial basis, and also because Central Labor Unions, Trades Councils, Trades Assemblies, etc., were formed, which had the effect of holding local unions together.

In 1881, a call was published, emanating from a convention of labor delegates from the central and western States, for a convention to be held in Pittsburg about the middle of November. This convention was important as laying the foundation of the American Federation of Labor. The call itself was peculiar, for it spoke of a federation as being the form of organization necessary for trade unions. The convention was organized with John Jarrett, President of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, as chairman. One hundred and seven delegates, representing two hundred and sixty-two thousand workingmen, were assembled, and the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada was permanently organized. Samuel Gompers, now President of the American Federation of Labor, was a member of the first Congressional Committee. Knights of Labor, as well as delegates from trade unions, were present, and it was understood that neither body was to change its form, and that any division of organized labor was to be discouraged. Among the principles adopted at this convention were the following: compulsory education of children, abolition of child labor, uniform apprentice laws, enforcement of the eight-hour rule,

[1] P. J. McGuire, *American Federation—its History and Aims.*

restriction of contract prison labor, and the abandonment of the store order system, a first lien for labor, repeal of the conspiracy laws against organized labor, the establishment of a United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the continuance of a protective tariff for American industry, the enactment of a contract labor law against immigration, restriction of Chinese immigration, the licensing of stationary engineers, governmental inspection of factories and workshops, the sanitary inspection of food and wells, and an employers' liability law. Several of these reforms have now been adopted by the federal government and by the legislatures of the separate states.

The second annual convention of this Federation was held in Cleveland, November 21st, 1882, Samuel Gompers being elected president. The convention issued a manifesto discountenancing political action, and relating the benefits of a federation as distinguished from other forms of national unions. This was aimed at the Knights of Labor, which organization at this time was a serious rival. The manifesto is important as showing the right of the Federation to exist and as a defence of the federation form of labor organization. It is as follows:

"We favor this Federation because it is the most natural and assimilative form of bringing the trades and labor unions together. It preserves the industrial autonomy and distinctive character of each trade and labor Union, and without doing violence to their faith or traditions, blends them all in one harmonious whole—a 'Federation of Trades and Labor Unions.' Such a body looks to the organization of the working classes as workers, and not as soldiers (in the present deprecatory sense) or politicians. It makes the qualities of a man as a worker the only test of fitness, and sets up no political or religious test of membership. It strives for the unification of all labor, not by straining at an enforced union of diverse thought and widely separated methods, not by prescribing a uniform plan of organization, regardless of their experience or

interests; not by antagonizing or destroying existing organizations, but by preserving all that is integral or good in them and by widening their scope so that each, without destroying their individual character, may act together in all that concerns them. The open Trades Unions, national and international, can and ought to work side by side with the Knights of Labor, and this would be the case were it not for men over zealous or ambitious, who bury themselves in the destruction of existing Unions to serve their own whims and mad iconoclasm. This should cease and each should understand its proper place and work in that sphere, and if they desire to come under one head or affiliate their affairs, then let all Trades and Labor Societies, secret or public, be represented in the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions."[1]

There are, we see, two great ideas in the formation of the larger unions. The first is that represented by the Knights of Labor, namely that as all labor is working for a common object the most unskilled should join hands and work side by side with the most highly skilled artisan, and that one man should have as much power as another and no more. The qualifications for membership are almost as slight as those for membership in society itself. All here are direct members of the national organization.

The second idea is that represented by the American Federation of Labor. A man is only secondarily a member of this body through the local trade union to which he must belong. This is a union of unions and of federations. The unskilled laborer may find a place here, but he must belong to a union and that union must be affiliated with the larger body. Unions of unskilled laborers are comparatively rare, but there is a place for them in the composition of the American Federation.

On December 8th, 1886, the Federation Convention was called to meet at Columbus, Ohio, and trades unions which were not affiliated were asked to meet in a convention of

[1] Quoted by Carroll D. Wright, *Evolution of Industry*.

their own in the same city. After four days' joint session, the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions was dissolved and the American Federation of Labor took its place. It began with twenty-five national organizations and a membership of three hundred and sixteen thousand four hundred and sixty-nine laboring men all told. A constitution was adopted favoring the organization of local unions and the closer federation of such unions through central unions, with the further combination of these bodies into state, territorial and provincial organizations, and the establishment of national and international trade unions with reference only to the same trade in one national or international union.

The American Federation of Labor is organized strictly on trade union lines. The only departure from that principle is that in places where there are not enough workmen in any one trade to form a local union, men of several crafts may combine to form what is known as a federal union. This is supposed to be only a temporary scheme, the ultimate plan being the formation of one or more local trade unions. The objects of the Federation are:

First: To watch legislation, and to arrange, if possible, that nothing detrimental to the laboring class be enacted, as well as to initiate such legislation as may benefit this class.

Second: To bring about closer and more complete organization among workingmen throughout the country. This is effected by insisting that all local trade unions should join the national union in that trade, as well as the Central Labor Union of the district. The membership consists of four kinds of labor organizations: National Trade Unions, State Federations, City Central Bodies, and Local Unions. It is estimated that about five hundred thousand workmen are affiliated.

Three years after the meeting of the National Congress in Baltimore, an organization was founded in Philadelphia

which, although of very unpretentious origin, gave promise in later years of drawing all laborers of the United States to its own membership. It was a secret order, and for years not even its name was known. The trade union principle was retained in part, but we find men of all crafts members of the same local assemblies. "At the option of each Local Assembly any person over the age of sixteen years is eligible to become a member of the order, except employers in the manufacture or sale of intoxicating drinks, and no banker, professional gambler or lawyer can be admitted."[1]

Founded, then, on the idea of man as a laborer and not as a worker in any particular craft, this organization, known later as the Knights of Labor, grew until in 1886 it reached the height of its power and was said to have enrolled more than five hundred thousand members. During the years 1885 and 1886 the growth was especially rapid, and consisted for the most part of the more unskilled laborers, who precipitated many strikes and weakened the order. When this class of workmen saw that adherence to a principle was necessary even at a sacrifice, and that all strikes were not to be crowned with success even when sustained by such a powerful organization, they rapidly fell away and the order of the Knights of Labor grew weak as quickly as it had before grown strong, until now in 1899 it is doubtful if there are more than fifty thousand members of the order in good standing.

This, then, in outline is the history of attempts, successful and unsuccessful, to maintain federations of labor which have for a basis more than one trade, or trades which are closely allied.

Our object thus far has been to present a slight survey of the obstacles against which laborers have had to contend, as well as the standards and ideals toward which they are work-

[1] Article XVI., Sec. 127, K. of L. Constitution.

ing. All this is intended to serve merely as an introduction to the real object of the monograph—a study of one kind of federation, which during the last fifteen years has increasingly made itself felt as a real factor in the closer organization of laborers as well as in city and state legislation having for its object the improvement of the conditions of the laboring class.

CHAPTER II.

ORGANIZATION.

I. Rise of Central Labor Unions.

In the history of labor in the United States there are three distinct periods in the development of that form of organization known for the most part as the Central Labor Union. We have already stated what is known of the first period, which extends from the beginning of the labor movement to the close of the Civil War. Very few records have been left of this period, principally because they belonged to no general organization which would be interested in keeping account of them. Sometimes we know that they existed by the work they accomplished, or attempted, either in legislation or in organization or in assisting strikes and boycotts. In other cases we hear of them through the daily press on the occasion of a parade or Independence-day celebration. On the whole, the information which can be obtained is very slight. Their existence was confined to the largest cities, and here it was not at all continuous. Delegate bodies would come together and work with one special object in view. When this object was attained, or when it was seen that it could not be attained, the Committee or body of delegates would disband, to be formed again when some glaring wrong in the city or community showed itself, or when some man or men more enthusiastic or with more than ordinary ability entered the labor movement through the local union.

After the war, laborers all over the United States became imbued with a spirit of organization, local unions by the

thousand were formed, and the same thing occurred here as in England at about the same time. Laboring men looked for something larger and more powerful than the local union, and at once the idea of a union of unions was suggested. In almost all large cities in the country there were formed federations of trade unions, called by various names but alike in their essential features. They were meetings of delegates from the local unions, bound together by a loose federal bond for the purpose of further organization, education and mutual support in all disputes with employers. Dues were uniformly low. The different constitutions, moreover, show a great similarity.

Through factious quarrelling, caused for the most part by politics, through disputes arising from the overlapping of trades, and through the failure of local unions to send delegates, there was a constant tendency for Central Labor Unions to go to pieces and then to be re-organized. This was the rule until after the formation of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor. Under the former society, the Central Labor Union was called a "District Assembly," and differed in several particulars from the Central Labor Union under the latter organization.

The third period begins about 1880. From this year dates the formation of Central Labor Unions which have been continuous. Almost without exception, the Central bodies founded since 1880 are flourishing to-day.

The call for the convention which founded the organization that finally developed into the American Federation of Labor, was indorsed by the six Central Labor Unions of St. Louis, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Boston, and Chicago. Eleven such Unions were represented in this convention. In this call, one of the reasons urged was the encouragement of the federation of labor unions into trades assemblies. This has been a prominent feature of the work

of the National Federation ever since. In 1884, four Central Unions were represented in the convention; in 1887 ten, in 1888 eight, in 1889 twelve, in 1893 fifteen, in 1894 eleven, in 1895 fifteen, in 1896 fifteen. In 1888 there were represented in the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor two hundred and fifty-three District Assemblies. This does not necessarily mean that all these assemblies were bodies similar to the Central Labor Unions; for some of these District Assemblies were organizations of workmen of the same craft. They were similar, inasmuch as they were made up of delegates from local unions, but no Central Union is composed entirely of men in the same trade. With this distinction in view, they will be studied as being in the same class of organizations.

Of the seventy-nine Central Labor Unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor at present,[1] eight were chartered during 1895, twenty-three during 1896, thirteen during 1897, and twelve during 1898. Thus more than half of the existing Central organizations were chartered in these four years. As there were eleven represented in the Convention which founded the National Federation, there were but nineteen founded during the years between 1881 and 1895. It is evident, therefore, that this is quite a recent movement, or rather a recent extension on a large scale of a movement begun sixty-six years ago.

The organization of municipal federations of labor is a strong sign, not only of the power of organized labor, but also of the growing wisdom of labor leaders. The city is the natural, proper, and convenient sphere of action of organized labor. The greatest number of laborers is already found in cities, large and small, and the tendency is toward a still greater concentration at these centers. There are practically no labor unions outside of the cities, as the natural result

[1] April, 1899.

of the paucity of skilled laborers of any one craft in the villages, towns or country.

The sympathetic strike and the boycott are the two most powerful weapons for offense or defense possessed by labor unions, and neither of these can be used to advantage where some central organization does not exist. The most successful Central labor bodies, as will be seen later, are those which most frequently use, or threaten to use, these weapons.

A close federation in a larger district than the city is impracticable. A few have made the county the district of federation, but only where the cities or towns were small. These county federations are the smallest and weakest of all Central bodies. State federations have their own place, and can never do the work of the City Central. In neither the county nor the state could meetings occur often enough to keep all delegates actively in touch with each other, and really alive to their common interests. Public opinion too, which has become such an important factor in all labor disputes of late years, can be centered on a difficulty much more effectively by a central union in a city than by a committee of a state federation. Of course it is needless to point out that the local trade union is entirely too weak to fight its battles by itself. This might be possible if they were obliged to contend with a single employer or with employers only, who employed members of that particular trade union; but the tendency of employers to act together makes it absolutely necessary that trade unions should federate if they would meet employers on anything like an equal basis. The following, taken from the constitution of one of the foremost Central Labor Unions of the country, gives the reasons for founding the Central Labor Union:

PREAMBLE.

WHEREAS, It has been fully demonstrated by experience that unity of action and organization among working people are impera-

tive and essential in order to combat the ever-growing encroachments of organized and consolidated capital, and as there are many questions affecting the interest of the working classes which cannot be dealt with in special and separate Trade and Labor Unions, and as that end can be best attained by a central labor organization through which all branches of labor may prove allies to any particular one that may be oppressed, and all may form a Brotherhood for the defense and protection of the laboring masses; therefore, be it

Resolved, That we, the delegates of the various Trade and Labor Unions here represented, do hereby form the Central Labor Union of . . . , for the purpose of organizing and concentrating the efforts of the working classes for their own mutual protection, education and social advancement.

Having shown that federation is considered necessary by union men and that the particular form of federation embodied in the Central Labor Union is essential, let us look at this Central Labor Union and see just what its organization, functions, objects, and principles are, as well as what it may have accomplished and is likely to accomplish.

II. Officials and Committees.

The organization and methods of administration of Central Labor Unions are quite simple and when properly employed accomplish their purpose admirably. The trade unionist in general wants as little red tape as possible, and he wants a voice in whatever is done in his name. The endeavor to satisfy these wants has wasted much valuable time for Central Labor Unions; but to the extent that it keeps the confidence and good will of the local unions, it is perhaps worth all that it has cost.

Officers.

The first officer to be considered is the president of the organization. In some central bodies he is of much more importance than in others, but in all this office is perhaps of

less importance than one would naturally think. His duties practically end with presiding and signing orders on the treasurer for money. The important function of appointing committees, however, falls to his lot, and as the success or failure of the undertakings often depends on the character of men he appoints, he has power to do much good or much harm. In most unions this office is filled every six months, and in a few cases the same delegate is not eligible for election for more than two successive terms. The New York Central Labor Union elects a president at each meeting, each union in turn having the right of nomination. This does not mean that the president must be, or often is, chosen from the union nominating; is is merely an attempt to secure impartiality. As a matter of fact, the leaders in the body, those men who have greater force of character, more intelligence, and more ability to keep order, are elected over and over again—not indeed consecutively (as this is forbidden by the constitution), but in such manner that a very limited number of men hold the office in more or less regular rotation.[1]

The reason for the failure on the part of some Central Unions to elect a permanent president touches a very real danger with which they have to contend and to which the delegates are very much alive. That is the abuse of authority and the consequent reluctance to delegate to any one man more power or representative authority than is absolutely necessary. A man known as the president of an organization is naturally supposed to be acquainted with its policy and to speak for it. For many societies, perhaps we might say for most societies, it is fitting that this should be so. The members are closely bound together, and the

[1] Since this was written a consolidation of two central bodies has taken place in New York, and under the New Constitution the president is elected for three months.

policy can be known definitively, and there are not apt to be many varying opinions among the members. On almost every subject the delegates to a Central Labor Union are content to rely on the judgment of a president of their own choosing. There is one question, however, on which officers rightly enough must not claim to speak for the body and, by imputation, for the union men whom the delegates represent.

This is the question which has caused more trouble for labor unions as such than perhaps all other questions combined. It is the question of politics. As this danger to Central Labor Unions will be discussed later, it is mentioned here only to show one reason why some central organizations have no permanent president. Not only presidents, but all officers of the society are subject to this accusation at times. To give one example of what is meant: During a spirited campaign, when it was thought that a certain election would probably be very closely contested, a party paper published an alleged interview with the secretary of one of the larger Central Labor Unions. The secretary was made to say in that report that not only all union labor connected with the Central Labor Union, but also all union labor in the state was in favor of a certain political party. Of course, as an individual he had a right to say this if he believed it; but as secretary of a union, representing perhaps forty or fifty thousand men, he did not possess that right. It turned out that the man was not in a condition to know what he was saying when the reporter interviewed him; and we believe he was ultimately forgiven. Sometimes, too, the president may voluntarily use his office to obtain political preferment; and most bodies which have a permanent president have a constitutional provision whereby he must immediately vacate the office when he becomes a candidate for a political position, even though it be by appointment.

The effect of this short term for the office of president is, of course, to avert the possibility of much false representation, and to prevent the use of the office in behalf of some individual. On the other hand, the organization suffers because it has no real representative when it is not in session. There is, however, one Central Union in the United States which has such a representative, even though the term of office of the president is limited to six months. Of the duties of this representative we shall speak later.

The office of corresponding secretary of the Central Labor Union is not very different from the same office in other organizations. He replies to all the correspondence of the body; he reads in the meeting all the correspondence which has been received by him in his official capacity; he must furnish each constituent union with a record of the proceedings of the Central Union; and he must perform other duties which the Central Union may direct. His compensation varies from one dollar and fifty cents to two dollars for each meeting. As a matter of fact, in view of the salary paid, the work connected with the position is very large. Frequently he must communicate with the secretaries of all the constituent unions—an obligation which calls for the writing of from four or five to two hundred and fifty letters. Besides this, he is continually called upon to write letters of information to local unions and to other Central Unions, as well as to communicate with the daily papers, with employers and with the city government. His duties often call for considerable tact, as on the tone of the letter frequently depends the successful accomplishment of what the writer desires. The corresponding secretary has no representative capacity whatever outside of the meeting; he is merely a servant of the union. In some unions he is also the statistician, which, as far as Central Labor Unions are concerned, is a name and not a reality.

The office of recording secretary means simply what the name implies. He is supposed to keep a correct record of all the proceedings of the meetings and to attest the orders for money signed by the chairman. In many Central Unions this work is voluntary. Where there is any compensation, it varies from fifty cents to two dollars per meeting. About all that is required of a man for this position is that he be accurate and painstaking. Very often the offices of recording and corresponding secretary are filled by one man, and in the smaller unions, he may sometimes fill the position of treasurer also.

The financial secretary is invested with the duty of receiving and expending all moneys of the union, of keeping an accurate account thereof and of making reports of the same. In some cases these reports are made monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually; they are then printed and distributed to the delegates and sent to the constituent unions. The financial secretary generally receives something for his labor, but never more than two dollars per meeting.

There is a treasurer who must give a bond, usually five hundred or one thousand dollars. This is generally obtained from one of the companies organized for that purpose, and the Central Union pays the expense. It is thus simply a matter of insurance for the union, with the bond as the policy. The treasurer deposits the money in a bank and hands the book over to the trustees. He sometimes receives compensation, but never more than two dollars per meeting.

Trustees are generally elected, two, three, or five in number, and have general supervision of all property of the union.

There is always a sergeant-at-arms who has various duties, the most arduous of which, in some unions, is to keep order. He is door-keeper and usher and has charge of the roll book after the roll has been called. He also sometimes receives

pay up to two dollars per meeting. Generally there is a small fine imposed on the corresponding, recording, and financial secretaries and the sergeant-at-arms for absence or tardiness without a good excuse.

These, together with a vice-president whose duties are merely nominal (unless the office of president should happen to be vacant) constitute, with one exception, all the officers of the Central Labor Union. This exception has been referred to, and consists of the office of business agent. It exists, so far as we know, in only one Central Union, although all local unions, which are strong enough, have the same officer known by the name of "walking delegate." The business agent is to the American union what the general secretary is to the union of England—the intelligent paid representative.

The following from the constitution shows the duties of this officer:

To facilitate the business of the Central Labor Union, there shall be elected a business agent, whose duties are herein defined. This official shall be elected by ballot and serve under the merit system, until the body finds it necessary to dispense with the service of such agent, or until he shall resign or be deposed for cause.

The business agent shall devote his entire time, consisting of not more than eight working hours of each twenty-four each day to the exclusive interest of the Central Labor Union, as may from time to time be directed. He shall arrange stated business hours where he may be met. The compensation shall be fifteen dollars per week, payable weekly.

He shall devote his time to the upbuilding of organizations affiliated with this body, and assist and instruct, upon request, new organizations in routine work of Unions. He shall act as investigator in all matters that may be submitted to him by the various Committees of the Central Labor Union, and perform such other duties as the body may direct.

He shall urge upon members of the Unions and others, the neces-

sity of supporting the organ of the Central Labor Union, and the labor press in general, and he shall be authorized to receive money therefor to be turned over to the proper representative of the paper.

He shall act as statistician, gather data bearing upon the condition of the workers, their social environments and wage rate in vogue.

The business agent shall also, whenever possible, gather and arrange the names of workers in unorganized trades, and arrange meetings with them to discuss the advisability of organization.

The business agent shall also secure all data possible pertaining to industrial and mercantile establishments in the city.

He shall keep a record of his transactions, which shall at all times be open for the inspection of affiliated Unions, and he shall submit a review of his labors at each meeting of the Central Labor Union.

Should the business agent fail in the performance of ascribed duties or neglect the same, or should he be guilty of insobriety or misrepresentation, or should he maliciously attempt to injure individuals with whom the Central Labor Union may have business transactions, he shall be held to appear before the Central Labor Union to answer for his actions, and when found guilty he shall be reprimanded, fined or discharged.

Besides the duties enumerated here there are many calls upon his time by committees and members of the Central Labor Union. He is, moreover, the real representative of the Central Labor Union, and since he receives a salary, he is apt to be a man who will represent the Union well. It is the opinion of members of this Central Labor Union that he earns much more than his salary, and that every such organization should have a like officer.

An example of the weekly reports of the Central Labor Union business agent is as follows:[1]

"Visited Malt Houses in interest of malsters, and all will sign agreement with possible exception of one; visited Cleveland Theatre in interest of Window Posters. Tried to organize Shoe Workers, but failed; visited New Union of Beer Bottlers and Drivers who will

[1] *Cleveland Citizen*, Oct. 15, 1898.

be chartered by National Brewery Workmen's Union; visited Grocers on West side in interest of Bakers, found that Ohio Baking Company offered to supply some of them with bread free of charge; visited Iron Workers Helpers, No. 6715; called on firm in interest of Bicycle Workers relative to boycott on Stearns wheel without result; visited Lyceum Theatre in interest of Window Posters; went to Lorain at request of Iron Workers Helpers' Union to adjust a grievance, there being a strike of non-unionists in a Vapor Stove plant, who desire to join the Union. Report received."

Committees.

Aside from the officers, the Central Labor Union is organized on the lines of the House of Representatives. To the numerous standing committees almost all business is referred before it is discussed by the whole body. Such an enormous amount of work is attempted by the Central body that it would be impossible for all the delegates together to accomplish it. This is attempted by the English Trade Union Congress, but the results are not at all satisfactory. The time is too short and the number of delegates is entirely too large to allow every point to be carefully canvassed in a public debate. As it is, Central Unions lose much of their efficiency because the delegates insist on transacting all business and discussing all matters in the entire body. These unions are in danger of breaking down by the very volume of business which they try to accomplish.

The standing committees are either elected by the union or appointed by the president. The latter custom prevails in a large majority of cases. The committees uniformly exist for a period of six months, but there is nothing to prevent their re-election or reappointment. These committees vary both in number and in size. There seems to be no particular rule which determines the size of the committee except convenience. There are generally either three or five delegates on each committee, but two delegates from the

same craft are not allowed to serve on the same committee. The larger unions have the greater number of committees, although this is not without exception; while in some smaller unions all the work is done by the whole body of delegates.

No one union has more than eight standing committees, but as some unions have committees for purposes entirely different from those of others, the total number of different committees is larger.

To show in a way what kind of questions come to the Central Labor Union, let us examine the various committees and their duties.

The duties of the *Committee on Credentials* are sufficiently explained by its name. The *Executive Committee* generally consists of the permanent officers of the union, and it is their duty to represent the union between meetings of that body, but only where the business affects an affiliated union and where it cannot wait for the regular meeting of the Central body. It must report at the next meeting any business done during the interval. We see here the great reluctance of the union to delegate its authority to any body of men, even though this committee, as might be presumed from its composition, is made up of the most trusted men among the delegates. The *Committee on Organization* is sometimes much larger than the others. For example, in the Chicago Federation of Labor this committee consists of fifteen members, while each of the others have three or five members. This not only shows the relative importance of the committee, but proves that much more work is required of it. Their duties are divided naturally into two parts: first, the organization of new unions; and second, the strengthening of the Central Labor Union by inducing locals to affiliate with it. The necessary expenses, and sometimes a definite sum per meeting, are paid to the committee by the Central.

Organization is one of the principal objects of all Central

Labor Unions, and to accomplish this end much time, labor, and money are spent. The ideal condition of affairs must be attained when every laborer is a member of some local labor union, and when all these unions are affiliated with a national federation through central labor unions. The means used to further organization among the unorganized are three: first, the regular Committee on Organization; second, the labor press; and third, the Organizer for the Central Union. The indirect influence of the results of organization, when seen in successful resistance to a reduction in wages or in the attainment of a shorter work day, has more to do with forming new organizations than anything that central labor unions can do directly. When, however, the desire for organization is once formed in a body of men, the organizer and the Committee on Organization can easily form a local union which will soon affiliate with the Central Body.

The work of organization of new unions is a necessary one to the life of a Central Union. For without such signs of progress, interest will be lost, and affiliated unions will soon drop away. Every new union formed and affiliated means that every boycott will be more effective, every strike less apt to fail, and every disagreement between employer and workmen the more likely to be settled by arbitration. Not only this, but the greater the number of unions represented in the Central Body, the more it will be respected and the more weight its resolutions and protests will have. This silent influence not only of Central Labor Unions, but of all labor unions is one of its chief benefits to the working man and to society at large. No one can estimate how many strikes have been avoided or how many difficulties have been adjusted simply because this organization exists in the community.

The duty of the *Legislative Committee* is commonly stated

as follows: "to use all honorable means to secure labor legislation, to prepare petitions and attend public hearings upon this subject, and to prepare such bills as the Central Labor Union shall direct. They shall make reports of all steps taken by them for approval of the body." As a working rule, every question of legislation or law which arises, is at once referred to this committee which reports later for the action of the whole union. Since the establishment of the state branches of the American Federation of Labor in ten states, and of the state assemblies by workingmen in a few others, organized almost solely for the purpose of affecting legislation, this committee of the Central Labor Union has not been so active as formerly in suggesting or promoting legislation. All questions of law, however, are turned over to this committee, which is empowered to obtain legal opinions.

As to the *Committee on Grievances and Arbitration* we find it stated that their duty is "to investigate all grievances presented by affiliated Unions, and upon request attempt to amicably adjust the existing difficulties between employees and employers. No strike shall be indorsed by this body until a full statement has been submitted, and all attempts to amicably adjust the difficulties have been exhausted or proved futile. Should any member of this Committee be directly interested in the affair, the president shall appoint another member to serve in his place. For their services they shall be remunerated at the rate of twenty-five cents per hour." Not only does the Grievance Committee take cognizance of difficulties existing between employers and union men, but a great part of their work consists in adjusting difficulties existing between unions affiliated with the Central body or between individuals and unions. To illustrate the work of this very important committee, it may be well to mention a case which recently occurred in one of the larger Central Labor Unions.

The Union of Eccentric Firemen requested the Central Labor Union to ask a union employer to discharge a certain man because he was a non-union man or a "scab." The case was at once referred to the Arbitration Committee, which after investigation found evidence of persecution; for the man had always been, and was willing to be, a union man, but had refused to pay an unjust fine. The committee reported that the Central Labor Union should request the Firemen's Union to receive the man back in their union. After a good deal of objection the man was received by the union, but only after he had been charged an initiation fee more than three times that of the ordinary fee. This action was justified by the statement that for several years the man had derived a benefit from union conditions, but had paid no dues to the union. If the Firemen's Union had not complied with the request of the Central the penalty would have been expulsion, while if the man had refused to pay the fine, the penalty would have been the loss of his job. This is but one example out of scores of cases adjusted by the Grievance and Arbitration Committee every year, and it is doubtful whether the adjustment of difficulties between employers and union men is more important than the settlement of controversies between unions or between unions and individuals. Without this latter service it would be impossible to keep a federation of unions intact. Of the causes of these disputes between unions we shall speak later.

The *Label Committee* exists for the purpose of securing recognition and support of all authorized labels and trademarks of all unions, and in every way possible advancing the sale of union-made goods. An agitation has recently been started for a universal label for all union-made goods, and the Label Committee has this in charge. Several Central Unions have a *Statistics Committee*, while in others this work is supposed to be performed by one of the regular officers.

In the Baltimore Union their duties are defined as follows: "To provide, whenever possible, data of unorganized crafts for the use of the organization committee. They shall compile statistics on such legislative measures as may be directed by the Federation of Labor on behalf of the Legislative Committee, in performance of its duty, and such other business as the Federation may direct." The work of this committee is almost entirely neglected. The *Finance* or *Auditing Committee* has the ordinary duties of such a committee. The *Resolution Committee* is peculiar to a few Central Unions which are more thoroughly organized. It passes on all resolutions before they are submitted to the union. Of course this does not bind the union to accept recommendations of the committee, but the effect is to cut off a great deal of useless debate. The *Education Committee* is one which exists in the organization of very few Central Labor Unions. Its duties consist for the most part in aiding to enforce the laws relating to compulsory education and child labor. Sometimes its scope is broader and includes attempts at education of workmen through lectures, pamphlets, lyceums, and the public press. Another committee has charge of all matters pertaining to communications from all sources outside of unions affiliated with the Central Union, and all matters concerning visitors. This committee reports at every meeting. It practically decides what communications shall be read and who shall have the privilege of addressing the union. It is very seldom that the report of this Committee is not concurred in.

The *Committee on Agitation* consists of men capable of presenting the rights and demands of unionists, and ever ready to do so, as well as to promulgate trade union doctrines. The object of this committee is to aid in moulding public opinion in favor of organized labor. It is found in very few Central Labor Unions, for each delegate generally con-

siders himself a committee for this purpose. Besides these committees, there is always in small Central Unions a *Committee on Building Trades*. Taken altogether, these trades are the best organized and most aggressive, and work under better conditions than other trades. They often stand as a unit on a question of wages or of hours or of recognition of the union, and really form a class by themselves. In the larger cities they have Central Unions of their own, which will be referred to later on. These Building Trades Committees are composed naturally only of delegates who represent trades connected with building. They have charge of disputes which may occur between any one of the Building Trades and the employer. If they are unable to adjust the difficulties, the matter is generally referred to the Arbitration Committee of the Central Labor Union.

As a matter of further organization for the better and more rapid transaction of business, several Central Unions in which the number of affiliated unions is very large, or where the number of delegates from each union is so great as to make the Central body unwieldy, if all the questions were to come up before it, we find the union divided into sections, according to trades. This scheme was carried out to a greater extent in the New York Central Labor Union, in the height of its prosperity, than in any other. There were at one time two hundred and eighty-seven local unions affiliated with the Central body, and as the constitution allowed three delegates for each local, there would have been a convention, if all were present, large enough successfully to block its own business. This was really the result until the division into trade sections was brought about. Provision was made for ten sections, but only four were organized. These were the Building Trades, the Food-producing, the Metal, and the Miscellaneous Trades sections. They were formed under the following clause of the Constitution:

"When there are four or more affiliated Trades or Labor Unions represented in this body, they may, with sanction of the Central Body, form a Trade section, which shall have power to do all things for the good and welfare of such bodies; but shall in all things be governed by this constitution and by-laws. There shall also be a Miscellaneous section, which shall comprise all Trade and Labor Unions other than those in regular Trades sections."

Some Centrals make provision for the affiliation of Allied Trades Councils, as the following section of one of the constitutions will show:

"Central bodies of distinct trades, consisting of delegates from a number of Unions, may be represented in this Council by five (5) delegates, and shall pay the same initiation and dues as a single Union, except an additional ten cents per month for every Union they represent, which money shall be used to forward the proceedings of this Council to every Local under their jurisdiction. This shall not prevent any of the subordinate Unions from securing representation in this Council, but when all the Unions of such affiliating central body are directly represented, it shall not be eligible to membership."[1]

The minutes of the different sections are read to the Central Union and indorsed by it. The Central Labor Union in this case is a federation of Trades Councils, and is a real advance in organization over the ordinary Central Labor Union. Only two constitutions consulted have provisions for trade sections.

Delegates and Constituent Unions.

The qualifications necessary for the affiliation of unions and the admission of delegates are few, but they are of very great importance to the life and work of the Central body. In the first place, none but labor unions are eligible, and the standing of these must be unquestioned. That is, there must be no doubt whatever that they are what they pretend

[1] Amendment to Constitution of Central Labor Council of Cincinnati.

to be—*bona fide* unions of laborers. This, of course, closes the doors to all unions of employers and "bosses," whatever the name, so that the responsibility for good or evil of all acts of the Central Labor Union rests where it should rest—on the laborers themselves. They cannot be dominated, from the inside at least, by organizations composed of men who, as they think, are directly opposed to them.

In the second place, these labor unions must have been in existence at least six months before they are eligible to affiliation. This rule is the result of bitter experience born of the days, which are not wholly past, when labor unions of all kinds took political action as unions and often helped prominent members to some political office. The endorsement of a Central Labor Union, which represented from ten thousand to fifty thousand workingmen, was a "consummation devoutly to be wished" by an ambitious local politician, and it was not a difficult matter for him to form local unions when all that was necessary was to have a president and a secretary. These were competent to elect delegates to the Central, and, as one of the delegates says, "there was no authority to go behind the returns." With the help of such "paper unions," almost anything might be endorsed. This will be shown more clearly when we come to the question of representation.

The Central Labor Union must not recognize local unions composed of men who have seceded from other local unions, unless the parent body agrees to this course. Factious quarrels and secessions are as prevalent among labor unions as they are in other societies; here they destroy the work of unionism, since such action in itself is disunion. Employers have no respect for so-called organized labor when that labor is divided against itself. One of the avowed objects of Central Labor Unions is closer organization, and they are simply complying with this principle when they

refuse to recognize a secession movement. However, they should go farther than this, and probably when they are stronger they will go farther, and refuse to recognize more than one organization in the same trade. Rival organizations of one craft in the same city cause more jealousy, strife, and consequent disorganization than perhaps any other one thing except politics.

As an example of what Central Labor Unions may do with this difficulty, the following case which occurred in the New York Central Labor Union may be cited. Two rival unions of livery and cab drivers with the same name sent delegates to the Central Labor Union, and this body was called upon to decide which was the parent body according to the constitution. After struggling with the question at almost every meeting for months, the Central finally decided to recognize neither unless they would join their forces and send only one set of delegates, which, it is understood, was done. While these two unions were fighting each other, however, the employers saw their chance of reimposing the long hours which the organization, when undivided, had succeeded in cutting down.

At present no matter how many unions of any given trade exist in the same city, if it is not represented in the Central Labor Union, the first union which applies is the one affiliated. Not until there is more advantage to a local in joining a Central body, can it be otherwise. When the time comes when a local cannot stand alone, but must seek federation with other unions, the Central can dictate stricter qualifications for affiliation.

As the affiliated unions must be *bonâ fide* labor unions, so the delegate from these locals must be a *bonâ fide* laborer. Not only must he be a wage-earner in the trade which he represents, but he must have been a member of the organization of that trade at least six months before he

can represent it. This is another check to political ambition and to the use of the Central Labor Union in the furtherance of such ambition. Moreover, it is to be presumed that in six months the members of a local union will know the man well enough to trust him as their delegate; while he, on his part, will know the wants of the union and temper of the members so that he may represent them more acceptably.

The classes of men excluded by the constitutions of unions which shut out any individuals, are the following: public officials, professional politicians, notaries, lawyers, and in general, any one who is not a wage-worker, even though he be a member of the local union. As there is no rule without an exception, we find that probably the largest Central Labor Union in the United States is virtually controlled by public officials, using that term in a broad sense so as to include all employees of the city government. Where this is true, the Central Labor Union is rapidly degenerating into a machine, whereby the party which holds control of the city government can help to continue that control. This is probably the very danger which the framers of certain Central Union Constitutions sought to avoid. We have said enough of the second class, the professional politician, to show clearly why he is not made eligible as a delegate. It may be readily seen also why lawyers are excluded, for they are not laborers and they represent the class from which politicians most naturally come. Notaries are excluded probably from an excess of fear that they too may become politicians and use the union for their own ends.

The delegate to the Central Labor Union is generally not a typical labor union man. That is, he is not like the rank and file of trade unionists. There is a certain natural selection going on in the trade union world as well as in

the world of nature. This selection is often made, not because of any inherent fitness which certain men may have over others, but because in the trade union meetings he is the man who speaks the most clearly or most exactly to the point, and, moreover, is always ready to speak on any subject. He is the man who makes himself heard and felt among his fellow craftsmen; in other words he is the natural leader. It is no wonder then that when some one is needed to represent the union, this man who is best known and who is the readiest speaker, should be elected. He may not be the hardest worker or the one who gives the best advice, but he is the one who, when the union is stirred by debate, always come to the surface. The Central Labor Union is composed of this kind of men just as a college is generally composed of boys who have been conspicuous in high schools and academies. And exactly the same thing happens in both cases. Each finds in his own environment that there are others who have been trained in the same sort of a school as he has been, and that there are many who are his equals and some his superiors. In the Central Labor Union there is a repetition of this process, with the result, as has been stated, that the men of real force come to the front. It is perfectly natural that the kind of men who have just been described should not be the most conservative among trade unionists or the ones least likely to take action on a great variety of subjects, even though sometimes it is difficult to see their connection with the interest of labor. The delegate then is not a typical trade unionist, because he is more aggressive, more of what he himself would describe as a "fighter" than are the majority of his fellows in the local trade union.

The delegate of course is the bond between the local union and the Central, and has duties to perform for each. It is his business to report to the Central Union all grievances

which the local is not able to adjust for itself. These grievances may be between the union and the employers, between this union and another, or between the union and the individual workman. He must also, so far as he is able to do so, and so far as it is necessary, persuade the Central Union to take adequate action upon the grievance thus presented. He must be present at all meetings of the Central and see that the dues of his union are paid. So important are his functions deemed by the local that he sometimes receives a small salary for performing them. His duties toward the Central Union are not many, but they are essential. He must be in regular attendance and must serve the society either upon committees or as an officer whenever elected or appointed.

The following is the pledge he takes on becoming a delegate: "I, ———, do solemnly and sincerely pledge my word and honor as a man that I will obey the rules and regulations of this Central Labor Union, and to the best of my ability, perform all duties incumbent upon me as a member thereof." In most unions this is the only pledge required. Under another head there will be given the pledge required by a very few Central Unions, which shows these unions to be essentially different from the majority.

The delegate is, of course, obliged to report back to his local union everything of interest to it. The independence of the delegate varies with the different Central Unions and also with the different locals. Very often he is instructed to vote or to introduce resolutions against his better judgment. This occurs altogether too often, and is simply another evidence of the lack of trust which trade unionists show toward each other. It is frequently a personal matter, depending upon the popularity and general standing of the delegate among his fellow unionists.

The delegate to the Central Union from the local union probably receives more benefit from the organization than

any one else. He learns here to discuss questions of interest to workingmen, in their relation not only to his own craft, but to all others. He is brought into contact, once a week, with delegates of from five to sixty different local unions of all trades, and his views of the industrial situation are necessarily broadened. Here is a lyceum, in which only real questions of vital interest can arise.

Representation, Dues, and Revenues.

The bases of representation in Central Labor Unions are almost as numerous as the unions themselves. In fact hardly any two federations of labor have, or have had, the same basis. This is one of the questions which have caused not a little trouble to labor leaders everywhere, and it really constitutes a troublesome problem. There are three principles of representation adopted by different labor federations: proportional, progressive, and arbitrary representation. Each has its advantages and its disadvantages.

Perhaps the most nearly ideal system is the application of the simple proportional principle; that is, one delegate for a certain number of members in the local union. This gives an equal representation to all trade unionists. We find, however, two grave objections. In the first place, the same difficulty arises as that which was raised by the small states when the Federal Constitution was about to be framed. It was feared that the larger unions with their many delegates would completely overshadow the few delegates of the smaller unions, and that their interests would, therefore, not receive the attention they deserve. They might even be forced out of the federation entirely. Of course it is manifestly impossible for labor unions to adopt the compromise which was adopted by the constitutional convention. Some other remedy must therefore be found. Another serious objection to the proportional system is the great number of dele-

gates which would attend the Central meetings if the number of constituents for each member were made too small. With this system, however, we have the most rational basis for collecting revenue for the Central Union, for taxation and representation could then be made proportional. This is not true of either of the other systems in use. The Chicago Central Labor Union allows one delegate for each one hundred members. The London Trades Council, perhaps the most successful Central Labor Union in the world, still holds to this principle. It is not difficult there, because the number of constituents is put at five hundred, and the delegates meet but once a month, while almost all business of importance is transacted by an Executive Committee.

American federations of all kinds are divided between the progressive and the arbitrary systems of representation, while almost all have the same system of revenues, although the latter often differ in amount. The progressive system is one frequently adopted by Central Labor Unions. In this system there is a minimum number of constituents, for which the local union is entitled to a certain number of delegates. If the union has more than this minimum number of members, it is entitled to one delegate for each certain additional number. For a good example of this system of representation we will take the Baltimore Central Labor Union: Any organization which has one hundred and fifty members or fewer is entitled to five delegates; organizations having over one hundred and fifty and fewer than two hundred and fifty members may have six delegates; organizations with over two hundred and fifty members are entitled to seven delegates.

Some Central Unions do not limit the number of delegates, but provide one delegate for each additional one hundred members. This system is capable of great variation, and in fact is varied to suit local conditions. If the number of unions affiliating is liable to be small, a comparatively large

number of delegates from each union is desirable; but where the number of unions is large, it is necessary to limit the number of delegates from each. Again, where the constituent unions are large, it is necessary that the number of members entitled to one delegate should be large also. The size of the Central body must be kept in mind. It must have a sufficient number of delegates properly to represent the trade unions; but it must not have so many that the wheels of business become clogged.

This system of representation does not readily lend itself justly to the prevailing method of collecting revenue from the trade unions; for wherever it is used we see taxation without representation. For example, under the Baltimore plan all members over three hundred and fifty would have no representation at all, while each member would pay the same dues to the Central Union. Thus, since each delegate has one vote, the smaller societies are much better represented than the larger ones. The American Federation of Labor overcomes the difficulty nicely, by limiting the number of delegates to its conventions, but proportioning the number of votes possessed by each to the number of trade union members he represents. The number of votes in these conventions varies from one to seventy-three for each delegate. The revenue is strictly proportionate in this case. The difficulty first spoken of, however, again arises, namely, that the smaller trade unions may be lost sight of.

The third system of representation used by Central Labor Unions fixes arbitrarily the number of delegates from each society. Generally five delegates are allowed, no matter how many members the local union may have enrolled. This is a most unjust system, for a union of forty or fifty members has exactly the same representation as a strong union of five hundred or six hundred members. In at least one Central Union this system was adopted as a remedy for the abuses

of a better system. The second system here described was in vogue, but there was no method of determining how many members a union really had enrolled. Any number could be sent, and if the credentials were all right, the delegates must be seated. The constitution was revised, and the arbitrary system of representation was substituted. The very obvious means of controlling the number of delegates by the *per capita* tax was overlooked, and the dues were also arbitrarily fixed. This is, of course, one of the means used to offset the injustice of the representation. As each union had the same number of delegates as every other union, it should pay the same dues. Moreover, in most Central Unions where this system obtains, no legislation affecting the locals may be enacted without first referring it to the constituent unions for action. This must be a popular vote, so that each trade unionist may record his individual opinion. It is in the Central Unions which use the arbitrary system of representation together with the *per capita* tax, and without the referendum vote, that the greatest injustice occurs.

The delegates to the Central body are commonly elected for six months or a year. In one case, where three delegates are elected from each local union, one is elected for eighteen months, one for twelve months, and one for six months. This is a refinement which is not as yet appreciated nor indeed necessary.

The quorum necessary to transact business varies from at least fifteen delegates, representing fifteen organizations, to five delegates, irrespective of the number of organizations represented. Some of the smaller Central Unions specify that one-quarter or one-third of the organizations must be represented. Each Central makes its own rules for the government of the delegates and punishes non-attendance by declaring the seat vacant.

The dues from the local unions to the Central are in

general very low and are just about sufficient to pay the necessary expenses. There are practically two methods in use of assessing these dues. One is the *per capita* tax—generally one cent or one and one-quarter cents per month. This is by far the best system, as it not only does justice to all, but generally insures a larger income. The second system is the assessment of an arbitrary amount upon each organization affiliated. This varies from fifty cents to two dollars per month, more frequently the latter. If it were possible to know accurately the number of members in each local, this system would probably never be resorted to. The membership could, in a measure, be determined by making the representation and vote in the Central depend upon the number of constituents paid for. This plan is carried out in the Trades Union Congress of England, as well as in the London Trades Council. But in these cases the dues are very much smaller—in the London Trades Council only four cents yearly per member.

Besides the one cent *per capita* tax or the arbitrary monthly fee in the Central Labor Union, each local union must usually pay an initiation fee of from two dollars to five dollars. When trades councils are affiliated with the Central, they must pay in addition to the same initiation fee and the same dues of the single union, a tax of ten cents for each subordinate union. When more money is necessary, the Central cannot levy an assessment, but is driven to expedients of doubtful advantage, like the picnic or the entertainment or the sale of the right to publish a Labor-day souvenir, which is a thinly veiled blackmailing scheme. It is a blackmailing scheme, because the one who buys the right either intimidates merchants and employers into giving money for advertising, or promises them protection against strikes and boycotts. Both intimidations and promises are made in the name of the Central Labor Union, but generally without warrant.

Very rarely is any provision made to carry on a strike or to assist unions when striking; there is no permanent fund upon which the union may draw in times of peculiar distress. The dues at present are too low to admit of this, and as a consequence, begging for funds to assist men on a strike and appeals to affiliated unions and to the public are phenomena most noticeable in the meetings and the minutes of the Central Labor Union. This not only demoralizes the men and the unions but guarantees no support to strikers even in a most just cause.

CHAPTER III.

Objects and Principles of Central Labor Unions.

I. OBJECTS.

Every Central Labor Union publishes along with its constitution and by-laws certain objects for which it exists. These are ideals, rarely fulfilled completely, serving as an outline which the active, healthy union is always trying to fill out.

It is impossible to determine to what extent these objects are accomplished. There are no statistics of Central Labor Unions, even though it be the duty of an officer or a committee in each union to gather and preserve such statistics, and the minutes of the Centrals do not furnish the material necessary to determine how much has been done. In fact most of the work done in the furtherance of many of the avowed objects of the Central Unions would not appear in the minutes at all. Often, however, by results in legislation, in education, and in organization can we see the work accomplished by the Central.

The following "objects" have not been taken from any one constitution, but include practically all those found in the constitutions of Central Labor Unions in the United States. There is variation in the "objects," as published but there is little, if any, variation in the real end or aim of Central Labor Unions. The principal difference is that some constitutions are more complete than others. Certain clauses are incorporated which, though not found in other constitutions, are as much a part of the work of one as of

another. All Central Unions are alike in the objects for which they were founded. The principles and methods of these bodies are often widely different, and will be treated later.

These "objects" may then be treated as if they were all adopted by a single Central Labor Union, and in general, as far as this point is concerned, what is true of any one is true of all.

The objects may be conveniently grouped under the three following heads:

1st. Organization.

2d. Education.

3d. Industry, or means of offense and defense.

1. *Organization.*

In speaking of the committee on organization, we have already referred at length to the importance of the function of organization in Central Unions. Too much stress can scarcely be laid upon this part of the work, for it represents the foundation of all influence or value which the acts of the Central body may have. Next to internal trade union disputes and political quarrels, the neglect of the work of organization is the most frequent cause of loss of influence and of the value of a Central Labor Union. Small locals need constant attention, for if they begin to lapse and withdraw from the Central, the evil effect is cumulative. The loss of each active local union means so much loss of power in anything the Central may undertake to do. This loss of power in its turn may be the cause of the withdrawal of other locals, as they would reason that they would not get value received for what they contribute.

The very first object in almost all constitutions of Central Labor Unions is that the body was founded for the more complete organization of all labor in the city or district, and

"the better to enable all organized labor in the city to act promptly in emergencies, and thus mutually help each other in labor difficulties by bringing to bear at once the combined influence of all labor organizations to effect a settlement." We see from this that the organization which is the object of Central Labor Unions is of two kinds: First, The complete organization of *all* laborers in local unions; Second, the uniting of these local unions into a federation. Nowhere has this program been entirely carried out. The most complete organization occurs, of course, in the smaller cities and towns. A few Central Labor Unions have reported that all local unions are affiliated with the Central Union; but there are always non-union workingmen to be found even in these towns. In the larger cities by no means all of the local unions are affiliated with the Central Labor Union or with the similar organization, the District Assembly of the Knights of Labor. Sometimes only a mere fraction of the local unions are thus federated. For instance, it is estimated that in New York City there are about five hundred labor unions, while not more than two hundred are affiliated with the four or five Central organizations. There are several reasons for this state of affairs. One of them is found in the fact that there are several Central organizations. In other words, as long as the federations of labor unions are at war with each other and cannot agree upon objects and methods, the local union will not affiliate with either.

The following is the testimony of an officer of a Central Labor Union on the question of Central organizations:

"After years of experience with several central organizations of the city almost constantly at variance, generally caused by some officer or individual member dragging his organization into his own petty squabbles, I have come to the conclusion that if organized labor is ever going to be united in Cleveland, it must be through

[1] The two largest bodies have since combined.

one central organization, in which every subject necessary to the welfare of the workers can be fully discussed and the wishes of the majority carried out; and whilst I have always believed a building trades council to be a necessity, I realize that kindred trades must remain in closest touch with, and be allied to the other craft organizations bound together in one grand central body, wherein the workers' interests are ever more preached and practiced. Such a body is the Central Labor Union of this city." [1]

Moreover, there are often several different organizations in the same trade and the Central Union will recognize only one of them. Oftentimes local unions which feel that they have not been treated justly by the Central withdraw and remain unaffiliated unless they affiliate directly with the American Federation of Labor.

This organization does not require that all locals should affiliate with Central Unions, but simply urges them to do so. This is because the Central Labor Union has no definite place in the organization of the larger federation, which is primarily a federation of national trade unions. To be sure, each Central Union pays its tax and sends its delegates to the convention, but no matter how large the Central may be it has but the one vote, while the number of votes of the national trade unions is based upon membership. Moreover, to show the very loose form of the Federation, and the way in which it looks upon the Central, it may be stated that each Central Labor Union even though it has not affiliated with the American Federation of Labor may send delegates and have a vote. It is also true in the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, if the "Knights" are represented in the Central.

In the present state of organization of labor in America the Central Labor Union holds a pecular position. It seems to be a federation outside of the regular lines of organiza-

[1] *Cleveland Citizen*, Sept. 24, 1898.

tion, almost unrecognized because its constituent unions have already been recognized through other representatives. Yet, as far as the city or district is concerned, this federation is capable of wielding a greater power and of yielding a far greater direct benefit than any national trade organization.

A national or state federation cannot have for its component parts both national trade unions and small federations of miscellaneous local unions upon the same basis. One or the other must be subordinate, and the time has not come when we can have a successful federation of Central Labor Unions. Indeed, the reason for any representation of the Central in the conventions of national federations is not at all clear. It is for the most part merely duplication. The work of the Central Labor Union is in any event local, and its connection with central unions of other cities is more fancied than real. As far as organization is concerned, its efforts should be confined to seeing that every workman in the city is a union man, and that every local union is affiliated with a Central Union—and that Central Union the only one in the city.

Long before this has been completely accomplished, organized labor will find itself in a position to enforce any just demand which is not directly contrary to economic laws.

2. *Education.*

The second group of objects is not considered by the Central Union of so much importance as the others, and less time and energy are spent in their accomplishment. Very often they are entirely neglected. The only importance these educational objects have for the present trade unionist is as a means of accomplishing the objects aimed at in the other groups. They aim to educate the laborer or the public, not in a general way, but only along those lines in which they

hope to accomplish amelioration in the conditions of labor or to effect certain reforms.

What they have to say in regard to general education, which is for children, is not properly a direct "object" of the Central Labor Union, but rather a principle for which it stands in the name of all labor, whether organized or not. This must be considered later on. The direct educational objects are as follows:

1st. To educate all classes in the true object of the trade union movement by means of lectures, pamphlets, public debates, distribution of industrial literature generally.

2d. To give reliable information concerning all trade disputes.

3th. To establish and maintain a labor press.

4th. To mould public opinion in favor of trade unions.

5th. To collect and preserve trade and labor statistics.

6th. To provide a congress of labor.

7th. "To find if possible the causes of the unequal distribution of the products of labor created from the natural bounties in and on the earth."

Some of these laudable objects are attained in a measure, and some are impossible of attainment by a Central Labor Union. The first is generally lost sight of except when some special object necessitates this sort of education, as in the case of a great strike or boycott, or a political movement by the Central Union. The funds of the union, as well as the time of the members, are too limited to do any such work on a large scale. A keen interest, however, is taken in all matters of general education undertaken by the public or by societies, where it is certain that it is not carried on in the interest of a political party. A noted labor leader, giving an address in a city where there is a Central Labor Union may be sure of great enthusiasm among its members and consequently may expect a good audience.

The information on labor disputes furnished by a Central Labor Union, while it may be reliable, must necessarily be looked upon as coming from a source which is bound to be biased. Such information is accepted as trustworthy only by those whose interests are the same as those of the members of the Central. Of course, the same thing is true of information obtained from the other side in the dispute. Thus, while the Central Union might really accomplish the object in this case, it is not of so much importance as if it were accomplished by a disinterested party.

Only about twenty per cent. of the Central Labor Unions of the United States own or control a labor paper; but many more, if not all, have official organs. It is of much greater benefit to a Central Union that there should be at least one large daily paper in the city, which is in sympathy with the labor movement, than that it should have a weekly paper of its own. More men are reached, and especially more men whom it is desirable to reach. The labor paper goes in the main only to those who already believe the doctrines preached; and little is gained in this way. Moreover, the spirit breathed by labor papers generally is so intolerant, so one-sided, and so radical that but little is accomplished aside from making the rank and file ever more radical and more bitter toward all capitalists. The present industrial system is the favorite theme of editors and contributors: a scientific discussion of an economic question rarely appears in their columns. As far as facts and news of the labor world are given, the labor press is careful and painstaking and fills a real want of the workingmen, but when the realm of theory is entered, the reader gets only a partisan view. The literature disseminated by means of the union is better, but it is written for the most part in the spirit of the advocate rather than in that of the impartial seeker after truth. The foregoing is true not only of the organs of Central Labor Unions

but, in large measure, of all strictly labor publications. Some of these, however, are of course much more conservative than others.

The moulding of public opinion is accomplished more by the regular work of the Central Labor Union than by any special effort it may make for this avowed object. This need, therefore, not be considered. Favorable public opinion is a necessity to labor unions in any dispute with employers, if they are to be successful; but this favorable opinion can come only after consistent and conservative action on the part of the union.

We have already spoken of the matter of collecting statistics and its almost entire neglect. This is one of the "objects" of the Central Labor Union whose importance does not seem to warrant the outlay of any energy. It is in fact quite doubtful if it is really within the province of the labor union to undertake this work at all. Training, time, and money with which to make a success of it are all lacking, while the frequent changes of committees and officers would render it very difficult. Moreover, we have state, and in a few cases municipal, bureaus of labor statistics which are more reliable and which can do the work very much better. As an auxiliary to statistical bureaus, however, they may prove of great value.

The Central Labor Union provides a congress of labor where representatives may meet to "discuss and examine all questions affecting the general interest of the workers." Here the delegates may be lifted out of the narrow sphere of their own craft and be led to look at questions which are vital to trade unionism and labor generally, from different points of view. Here they may see how a trade dispute in any one craft may affect other workers, and how the trade unions may be mutually helpful. Thus in numerous ways are the ideas of the delegate broadened in industrial matters, and as

he is an influential member in his local union, the local union receives the benefit, the effect of which is to be observed in its more rational action.

The final educational object of Central Labor Unions is the most ambitious of all and is least likely to be accomplished. It is absolutely impossible for such a body of laborers to deal with such a question, however desirable and necessary its solution may be.

3. *Offensive and Defensive.*

The real objects of the foundation of Central Labor Unions and those for which the foregoing are simply as means to an end, are what we have put under the head of "Industry or means of offense and defense." They are:

1st: To protect the rights and to defend the interests of the laboring classes.

2d: To render assistance to locals in securing concessions to all just demands.

3d: To guard against, and to use only as a last resort, the strike and the boycott.

4th: To aid in the adoption of the union label.

5th: To further by every possible means the settlement of industrial disputes by arbitration.

Many Central Labor Unions content themselves with the first of these objects without specifying further. Indeed, this probably states the whole question for Central Unions, for they have no system of insurance or of benefits, and practically no social functions, such as are the foundations of the local. Under such a clause as this, almost anything may be discussed or attempted unless other parts of the constitution forbid. It is best, however, as many unions do, to show along what lines and in what manner these rights are to be protected and these interests defended.

In following out this program, one of the first benefits

which local unions expect and receive at the hands of the Central Union is aid in the adoption and use of the trade union label. The union label affixed to a product asserts that that product has been manufactured under what the unionist calls "fair" conditions. These "fair" conditions include the payment of the rate of wage demanded by the union, the working of a certain number of hours, also fixed by the union, and all sanitary conditions favorable to the health and well being of the worker as well as cleanliness in the manufacture of the product. These latter conditions are supposed to be determined by the union working through the legislature and the Board of Health. The union label is granted to an employer only after he has complied with all the conditions which the union imposes. The reimbursement to the manufacturer for any added inconvenience or expense incident to such compliance is supposed to come from the extra patronage he may get from the consumers who buy only union-made goods when possible, together with the satisfaction which comes from knowing that he is treating his employees fairly. There is, of course, the added benefit, which is often very considerable, of keeping the good will of his employees and of being exempt from strikes in his factory and from boycotts on his goods.

There are at present thirty such labels (including the general union label) which are endorsed by the American Federation of Labor. There are also in some cities other local labels, indorsed by the Central Labor Union.

The assistance which the Central can give to unions in the consumption of union goods through recognition of the union label, is necessarily local, and consists for the most part of agitation, of education in conditions under which non-union goods are made, contrasted with the fair conditions of union-made goods, and of insistence on union conditions wherever, as a union, it comes into contact with

dealers. Local unions often fine their members if detected in the use of a non-union or "scab" product; but the Central Union has not yet reached a point where it can force the locals to conform to such rules. There is at least one exception to this rule. One Central Labor Union has a resolution on its minutes to the effect that all unions affiliated shall employ no musicians except those belonging to unions affiliated with the Central Body. It is not a part of the constitution, and no penalty is attached; and the enforcement depends upon the circumstances of the individual case. The musicians' union complained that it was treated unjustly, when the Central voted that another local need not break a contract already entered into with non-union musicians, as it would cost the latter local one hundred and twenty-five dollars. Unions or union men are inconsistent when they employ non-unionists or non-union goods, but when a Central Labor Union attempts to force the component unions to such consistent action, it must be stronger as a federation, and offer more advantages than it does at present, or it will soon disintegrate. As yet, the trades unionist has not arrived at the point where he can be forced to give up his personal independence even for the good of the principles in which he firmly believes.

The real aggressive work of the Central Union is divided into three parts:

1st: Efforts at conciliation or arbitration.

2d: Sanctioning or ordering a strike or boycott.

3d: Support of the strike or boycott.

Let us suppose that a local union has some difficulty with an employer, and is unable to settle it alone. As a final resort the facts are laid before the Central Union and are at once referred to the arbitration committee or to a special committee. The committee visits the employer and tries to adjust the dispute, and in doing so has, of course, the whole

potential force of the Central Union behind it. This conference very often has the desired effect for two reasons: first, the committee will not be quite so prejudiced, and will be inclined to look at the question in a broader light and perhaps to make concessions which the local would not make; or perhaps the local committee could not gain access to the employer at all, while the committee from the larger organization can. In the second place, a federation of unions has more influence and power than any single union, and this fact is generally recognized by the employer. But if the committee is not able to adjust the difficulty, it makes this report to the Central, with or without recommendations. Then if the case is considered of sufficient importance, the Central Union may sanction a strike.

Central Labor Unions, without exception, in the United States have declared, without reservation, in favor of arbitration as a means of settling all industrial difficulties. This statement is found in the constitution of every such body, and is acted upon whenever opportunity occurs. It offers its services either as a court of arbitration, or to aid in any manner the state or local boards of arbitration in order that difficulties may be adjusted in the only sensible way.

As a necessary result of this endorsement of arbitration, the strike is discouraged in every possible way, and is never resorted to, in theory at least, and so far as the Central Union is concerned, in practice, until all other means have failed. Many more strikes would occur among disaffected workmen, were it not for the temporizing influence of the Central body, and for its refusal to support them, either morally or financially. This is one of the real blessings of the Central Labor Union, not only for the laborer but for the employer and the public. No strike receives the support of the Central body unless there is a well defined principle at stake, and often not then, unless there is a reasonable chance of success.

If there is fancied wrong or oppression among a certain class of workmen, the matter is brought up in the local union first, and is rarely settled without the intervention of the Central body. The regular delegates of that craft are there as well as the general organizer to give information, and the combined wisdom and experience of all the delegates are brought to bear on the difficulty. Thus direct knowledge is brought weekly to a body, large and powerful, and wise enough to hold the respect, not only of the employer, but of the general public as well. If the trouble cannot be settled peaceably at first, arbitration is resorted to, generally through the influence of a Central Union. If this fails entirely and if a strike or boycott is ordered, it is not for the trade union most interested to fight the battle alone, but both moral and financial support is given by the central and by all affiliated unions. This positive help is worth much, but much more good is accomplished by the fact of the simple existence of such a force in the city. Employers are more careful of the treatment of their men and fewer strikes and boycotts result. Much is therefore saved to both employers and workmen.

The weapon of offense and defense most feared by some classes of employers, and most frequently used by laborers, is the boycott. This is, indeed, now prohibited by statute in twenty-three states, two of these prohibiting boycotting in terms, and twenty-one having laws which may be fairly construed to the same effect. These laws, however, like the laws against blacklisting, are easily evaded, especially where the difficulty is local, as a boycott on retail merchants, newspapers, and manufacturers for a local trade.

Numbers count for more in carrying on a boycott than in any other work of the union. Practically only union men refrain from patronizing a boycotted establishment, and the merchant fears only when he loses numbers of customers.

The general public do not enter into a boycott. They regard it as a quarrel in which they are not interested, and have no time to look into the merits of the case.

Without the Central Labor Union, an effective boycott could not be carried on in the city. If it could, it would soon be abused. Without a restraining power, petty grievances, real or imagined, would result in a boycott, and this, too, possibly when only a small local union was affected. The Central Labor Union endorses a boycott only when every other means has failed, and then only when the Committee on Grievances recommend and the delegates vote it by a large majority—usually two-thirds or three-fourths. When a boycott is declared, every affiliated union is required to support it. If they do not, they forfeit the right to such support when they are in a similar difficulty. If any affiliated union should declare a boycott without the sanction of the Central body, other affiliated unions are not required to support it. Such a boycott would be so ineffective that it is quite unlikely to be declared. The official organ of every Central Union publishes a list of firms "we don't patronize." This list contains not only the local firms, but reaches to the products of manufacturers from Maine to California. The *Cleveland Citizen* of August 27, 1898, has a list of eighty-five such firms, and the *Federationist*, the official publication of the American Federation of Labor, published in December, 1898, a list of ninety so-called "unfair firms." Not all boycotts of one Central Union are endorsed by others or by the American Federation, but each one rests on the merits of the case. Thus proper checks are put upon wholesale boycotting, and a resort to arbitration and other peaceful means of settling the difficulty is assured. The boycott is more often used than a strike, for not only can union men in this way reach classes which would be quite safe from a strike, but the method is at once more convenient and less expensive.

In but one constitution have we been able to find that a strike or boycott may be ordered by a Central Union. This order, however, carries with it no more guarantee of assistance than a mere sanction. It is not binding on the local, and practically means only a sanction. Where a strike is considered, the local union must reckon not only with the Central Union, but with the National Union to which it belongs, and the decision of the Central Union may be overruled. Since, however, this is only a sanction and not a binding order, no clash of authority occurs. Finally, if after every means of settling the difficulty peaceably has been tried and has proven futile, and if a strike or boycott, or both, have been declared, the resources of the Central may be strained to the utmost to carry the war to a successful conclusion. If, however, the local union has declared a strike or boycott without first consulting the Central, the latter considers itself absolved from responsibility and may refuse any assistance. But if the strike has been regularly declared, the Central, since it has no fund for carrying on strikes, must devise ways and means of raising money. All affiliated unions are requested to contribute. This is not compulsory, but if a local refuses to aid in supporting a strike sanctioned by the Central, it loses all right to be helped in a like emergency, unless when the call came it was itself engaged in a strike. This refers simply to financial or moral assistance and does not include the necessity of striking in sympathy to aid the striking union. The general Central Labor Union has no power to order a sympathetic strike, although if a fair-minded committee from a conservative Central should recommend this action, most affiliated locals would feel bound to accede to the request. A special form of Central Labor Union, which we shall consider later, has power to order a sympathetic strike, and is accordingly more feared by the employers.

In only one case have we been able to find that the assessment for financial assistance has not been left to the local unions; this is in the Central Labor Council of Cincinnati. The constitution provides:[1] "If a majority of the aggregate membership of the organizations represented in this council vote in favor [of an appeal for financial assistance], a *per capita* assessment shall be levied upon all such organizations for the assistance of the one in distress." This is a very notable departure from the ultra-democratic theories of trade unionism held in the United States. Generally the Central performs merely the duties of an agent, and collects the voluntary contributions from the local unions and distributes the same to the strikers. This is very important, especially to the local union in a craft which has no national organization to which it can appeal. Without such aid from the Central Union the weak local must almost inevitably lose its fight, however just the cause may be.

Various schemes for raising money are resorted to by the Central; lotteries, dances, picnics, and the subscription books are favorite methods. Men are also sent out over the country to visit the unions of the different cities in order to extend the boycott and collect funds. By these men the Central Labor Unions are found most convenient, for in addition to generally obtaining a donation from them, they can meet the representatives of the different locals, find the time and place of meeting, and enlist the sympathy of the delegates in the cause they represent. Public opinion is also strongly appealed to through the press controlled by the Central Labor Union, and through numerous pamphlets and speakers.

If the strike is of importance, as standing for a great principle, a sympathetic strike may be determined upon, although this is very far from probable for two reasons. First, every additional man who leaves his work reduces the

[1] Article 7, Section 4.

possible resources with which to support the original strikers; and, second, the public is bound to be seriously inconvenienced and likely to transfer its sympathy to the other side in the controversy. Very rarely indeed, then, will a Central Labor Union recommend a general strike in sympathy with the original strikers.

II. PRINCIPLES.

The principles of Central Labor Unions represent not the direct and immediate aim of organization, but rather the foundations of labor organization. They represent the attitude of the Central Labor Union in regard to public questions. If the Central were a political party, the list of principles would be called its platform; in fact, it is so called by several Central Unions, particularly those which have decidedly socialistic tendencies, even when they do not, as a very few do, ally themselves with a socialistic party.

These principles are divided, according as they affect the laborers, into the following five classes:

1st: Industrial.
2d: Organization.
3d: Legislative.
4th: Political.
5th: Socialistic.

By industrial principles are meant those which directly affect the worker as such, and have to deal with his immediate environment, health, wages, or working time. They may be summed up as follows:

1st: Abolition of child-labor under fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years.[1]
2d: Sanitary inspection of mines, factories, and dwellings.
3d: Abolition of the truck system.
4th: Abolition of convict labor.

[1] The age-limit varies in different unions.

5th: Establishment of a general eight-hour work-day.

6th: Equal pay to men and women for the same service.

7th: Abolition of the tenement-house and sweat-shop systems.

8th: Weekly payment of wages.

Organization principles are those which have to do with qualifications of men and unions, as well as with results aimed at through organization. These might as well have been grouped under the objects of Central Unions, as under this head. They include the following demands:

1st: Color, nationality, or denomination should not debar a laboring man from the rights of unionists.

2d: All proposed labor legislation should be discussed and altered, if necessary, by the labor unions.

3d: The conditions of the laborer should be ameliorated and "fair" concerns supported.

4th: The Central Labor Union claims a right to public recognition along with the various commercial organizations, as it wishes to co-operate in all movements looking to the public welfare. In other words, according to this declaration the Central Labor Union desires to be considered as the same kind of an organization as a Board of Trade, for instance, because both are working for the business prosperity of the community. As a matter of fact, they are very rarely, if ever, looked upon with the same degree of respect.

The legislative principles of Central Labor Unions are numerous, for legislation is regarded as one of the best and easiest methods of accomplishing the objects of labor unions. The American Federation of Labor has a lobby in Washington, and each State Federation has a lobby at the state capitol. The Central Labor Union has no lobby in a legislative body, but the course of the city and state legislation is carefully scrutinized, and when necessary the Law and Legislation Committee looks after labor's interests in the city

council, or even in the state legislature. As an example of the active interest taken by Central Labor Unions in such matters it may be stated that on April, 1896, in New York State, eighty delegates appeared before the committee of the American Federation of Labor state branch in the interests of a bill calculated to benefit the bakers.

It may be pertinent to print herewith a resolution found on the minutes of a large and flourishing Central Labor Union:

"*Resolved*, That the Central Labor Union subscribe for the ——— [the official paper of the city], and that the law and legislation committee review the same and report on all matters affecting their interests, and that the attitude of the municipal members [city council] be noted and a report made . . . , in order that at the succeeding election intelligent voting could follow."

The following are the declarations of the different Central Labor Unions in regard to legislation:

1st: There shall be free and compulsory education of children up to the age of fourteen years.

2d: Gambling in stocks and in necessaries of life shall be prohibited.

3d: The fee system in payment of public officers shall be abolished.

4th: The system of initiative and referendum shall be adopted for all laws.

5th: An employers' liability act shall be passed which shall not interfere with the common-law right of recovery.

6th: The Australian ballot system of voting shall be introduced in caucuses.

7th: There shall be a state apprentice law.

8th: All municipal laws shall be revised and simplified.

9th: Capital punishment shall be abolished.

10th: Ownership of land by aliens shall be prohibited.

11th: All indirect taxes shall be abolished.

12th: All beneficial labor laws shall be enforced.

13th: Pauper immigration shall be prohibited.

14th: The workman shall have a first lien for wages.

15th: All conspiracy laws shall be abolished.

16th: The employment of armed forces by private corporations shall be prohibited.

17th: A reform of the judiciary is necessary.

The political declarations are not many, but they are the most active principles, for there is always some one to see that, as far as possible, they are not violated. They are as follows:

1st: No support shall be given to a political organization.

2d: Delegates or officers, as such, shall not enter politics.

3d: There shall be no politics in the municipal service.

4th: All delegates shall become citizens.

5th: The President, the Vice-President and the United States Senators shall be elected by direct vote of the people.

6th: The Central Labor Union is not a political body, but it claims the right of expressing and exercising its views, rights and principles on all issues affecting the right of labor and the brotherhood of man, and of carrying the same into effect in such legislative manner as the body deems beneficial to the wage-earners of the community.

There seems to be among laboring men a growing tendency, which is reflected in Central Labor Unions, to indulge in a belief in socialism. This is a frequent cause of quarrels and of consequent splits in what would otherwise be strong bodies. Some of them are dominated by socialists but keep clear of the party, while others enter actively as an organization into political campaigns. The active outward growth of the socialistic Central Labor Union, however, is retarded by the attitude of the American Federation of Labor toward socialism as embodied in a political party. The position of the federation in regard to political action has often been defined by successive conventions in the fol-

lowing words: "The American Federation of Labor most firmly and unequivocally favors the independent use of the ballot by the trade unionists and workingmen, united *regardless of party*." The American Federation of Labor will not grant a charter to a Central Union if the name of a branch of a socialist party appears on the roll of affiliated unions. This was thoroughly discussed at the convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1890 at Detroit; and the discussion was published as one of the American Federation of Labor documents. Many of the strongest unions, however, are socialistic without being connected as organizations with the socialist party. They may accordingly be chartered by the Federation.

The socialistic declarations of the Central Unions are found in the following demands:

1st. Government ownership of all means of communication and transportation.

2d. Municipal ownership of gas, electric lighting, water, telephone, and street railroad plants.

3d. Abolition of contract labor on public works.

4th. Collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution.

5th. Taxation of land values irrespective of improvements.

6th. Abolition of national banks and the substitution of treasury notes for bank bills. All notes and money to be issued directly by the government.

7th. Establishment of postal deposit and savings banks.

8th. Public maintenance of a public hall for every assembly district.

III. ALLIED TRADES COUNCILS.

A special kind of Central Labor Union which yields a more direct benefit to constituent unions than any other is that which is known as the Allied Trades Council. The name itself is perhaps as much of a description as is neces-

sary. It suggests at least something of the composition of the Union. It is, as the name implies, a council or delegate body composed of representatives of a group of trades which are closely allied in calling. There are but two such groups at present: the Building Trades and the Printing Trades. Craftsmen who would naturally belong to these may be found in every large city in sufficient numbers to be joined into local unions and federated into a Council or Central Union. In many of the larger cities, and indeed, in some of the smaller ones, where special industries are localized, men of other allied trades are numerous enough to form similar organizations, but nowhere are there such unions of the textile trades, or of the iron trades, or the boot and shoe trades.

The explanation of this is, of course, that the different laborers in these trades work simply on various parts of the same product, as in the case of boot and shoe workers, and that there is consequently not enough differentiation in the work. All interests are more nearly identical, and therefore a national union embracing all parts is the best form of organization. In the building or printing trades, while the workers may work on different parts of the same product, that product is not such as always needs the combined work of all crafts, nor are all the parts considered equally necessary. For example, a building may be complete without the work of electrical workers, or tile layers, or cornice and skylight makers. There is not, in other words, among the craftsmen in the building or printing trades the unity of interest which would lead to an all-embracnig national organization. There is, however, enough of an identity of interest to permit a strong federation to be formed in smaller districts for mutual protection; and there is enough of interdependence among such trades seriously to embarass all the others if one trade were in difficulty with the employer. One of the principal duties of allied printing trades councils

as outlined by the Conference of Delegates from Allied Printing Trades Councils of the United States is "to make grievances of employes in one department of the establishment the grievances of those in all other departments." In addition to this, the unionist in these interdependent trades sees an opportunity to wield a powerful weapon in what he is pleased to call "industrial warfare," and materially to better his condition through its use. This weapon is the sympathetic strike, which has come to be much feared, especially by the building contractors. Ninety per cent. of the sympathetic strikes as summarized in the eighth annual report of Bureau of Labor Statistics of New York[1] were either inaugurated by building trades, or started to assist building trades. In this same report the following definition of a sympathetic strike is given: "The sympathetic strike is one in which the strikers, having no grievance of their own, take action out of belief that another body of workers is not treated fairly, and so take up their cause."

As almost all the Building Trades Councils are alike, it will suffice to describe the workings of the Board of Delegates of the Building Trades of New York and vicinity, for two reasons. First, it is one of the oldest; and second, it is one of the strongest in organization, in administration, and in the results obtained. It is not true, however, that all such councils are like this one. The New York Council may be taken as the most extreme case.

This organization was founded in 1884, and has had a continuous and successful existence to the present. The direct cause of the formation of the Board was to resist the combined action of the contractors, who formed unions among themselves to keep down wages, and to resist the efforts of the workmen to lessen the number of hours in a day's work. The object, as printed, is short and comprehensive: "To

[1] Eighth Report, 1890, page 935.

aid, by mutual support, each of the organizations represented in this body." The membership is limited to *bona fide* trades organizations in the building line, and representatives must be elected to serve not less than three months. Unlike most allied trades councils, this Board of Delegates is composed of "walking delegates," or, according to the new nomenclature, "business agents" of the local unions. Although nothing is said in the constitution on this point, these delegates are supposed to be paid representatives of the locals.

The obligations and rules governing delegates are much stricter than in the case of representatives to the ordinary Central Labor Union. The following is the pledge taken:

"I, ———, do solemnly and sincerely pledge my word and honor as a man that I will obey the rules and regulations of this Board, and faithfully conform to all usages thereof; that I will be punctual in my attendance at all regular meetings and all Committees of the Board; that I will render all the assistance in my power to all other delegates when ordered by this Board to do so; that I will convey and deliver all property which may be intrusted to me as a member whenever ordered by resolution of the Board, and that I will promptly pay my monthly dues to the Secretary of the Board."

The rules further provide that:

"Any delegate or organization having been affiliated with this body, connecting themselves with an antagonistic body, shall be refused assistance by any organization affiliated with this Board. Should such organization again seek admission to this Board, they shall be subject to a reinstatement fee of not less than fifty dollars."

There is also a system of heavy fines and penalties for non-attendance at Board and Committee meetings.

In spite of strict rules, fines and penalties, we find that almost without exception the building trades of the city which support "walking delegates" were affiliated with this Board until recently, when certain unions were disciplined, with-

drew, and formed the Building Trades Council. The same thing in general is true of the Allied Trades Councils of other cities, while, as has been pointed out, only a small part of the local unions of a city are affiliated with the general Central Labor Union. We need not seek far for the reason for this state of things. It is found in the difference which exists between the authority of the Central Labor Union and that of the Allied Trades Council, in the independence of action, and in the responsibility of the delegates.

To consider the last point first: The paid representative of the local union must continually show reason why his office should not be abolished. To do this, he must ever be on the alert to take account of every grievance which occurs among the members of his organization, and to use the most effective means in his power to adjust the difficulty to the satisfaction of the union. There is undoubtedly a tendency for a walking delegate to take account of petty grievances when real ones do not exist, but the amount of this has been grossly exaggerated. He generally has enough to do to take care of grievances which he cannot overlook. In his efforts to settle the dispute in a way with which his union will agree, he induces the union to affiliate with the federation or council whose interests are similar, and whose power is greatest. Then every grievance which is brought before the Council or Board of Delegates and is satisfactorily settled adds so much to the prestige of the Board, both on the side of the unions and on the side of the employers.

This body, as far as local disputes are concerned, is absolutely independent. The delegates take what action they please without the necessity of referring, in any case, to the different unions represented. The delegates are responsible only for results; they are not restricted by the unions as to means or methods. The organization is not affiliated with any other, and so is not hampered on either side. The only

restrictions come from the national trade organizations to which the locals belong, and if these are not called upon to support the locals when on strike, such restrictions amount to very little.

However, the centralized power vested in this body is very much greater than in an ordinary Central Labor Union. It has what the Central Labor Union has not, that is, the authority to order a strike. In fact, as a means to an end, this is its most important function. Not only may it order a strike, but it may punish those affiliated unions which do not support the strike when ordered. The strike ordered by the Board of Delegates is not like an ordinary strike, but in almost every case assumes the sympathetic form. This is exactly what gives such an organization its power. The following is the most important section of the constitution, as it involves this sympathetic strike:

"When a grievance is brought before this Board by any member, it shall become the property of the Board, and a Committee of all delegates having men on the job shall be ordered to investigate the grievance, and if deemed necessary, it shall have power to order a strike, providing two-thirds of the Committee favor such action. If said committee fail to agree, the delegate having the grievance shall bring the matter before the Board at the next meeting, when a majority vote of all delegates, having men on said job, may order a strike. In case the delegates refuse to order said strike, the delegate having the grievance, if he believes he has been unjustly treated, shall have the right to select one delegate having men on the job, and the delegates refusing to strike shall select another. These two, in conjunction with the president of the Board, shall further investigate such grievance, their decision to be final and binding on all delegates having men on the job, and any delegate failing to comply with the orders of either of the Committees mentioned in this section, shall stand suspended, subject to section three[1] of this arti-

[1] Section three referred to above makes six months' suspension the penalty for refusing to comply with the recommendations of the Committee.

cle. No grievance shall be received from non-affiliated unions, unless the members unanimously resolve to grant the request."

Several points, not to be found elsewhere, are contained in this article:

First, a grievance brought before the Board becomes the property of the Board. It is too late for the delegate who brings the grievance to settle the difficulty unless allowed to do so by the Board. Every delegate having men on the job is supposed to be as much interested as he is, and these delegates by a two-thirds vote may order a strike. If they fail to agree, the next step is an interesting one. The case is brought before the Board and the same Committee, *i. e.* those interested, may by a simple majority vote order a strike. This is a step toward centralization, but not so great as the next one. If the delegates should refuse to order a strike, the delegate with the grievance may select one delegate having men on the job, and the delegates who refuse to strike may also select one. These two, who, of course, will vote directly against each other, together with the President of the Board, shall decide after investigation whether the strike shall be made compulsory or not. This throws the whole burden of the decision on one man, the President of the Board. The decision is taken not only out of the hands of the workmen themselves, *i. e.*, the local unions, but out of the hands of their paid representatives, and put upon an official who may or may not represent men that are working on the job. This is an example of centralization of power of labor unions which probably does not occur again in the United States. In addition to disputes about wages and hours of labor, the hiring of a non-union man or the refusal to recognize the Badge of the Board of Delegates constitutes a grievance on the strength of which a sympathetic strike may be declared.

The result that is really accomplished by the Board of

Delegates is that the employers see that for once at least labor is really united. Oftentimes the mere interference or investigation by the Board is sufficient to adjust the difficulty. Although the Board has one or more grievances to consider at every meeting, and although a strike is taking place somewhere almost constantly, yet there are very few strikes of long duration.

The employers' associations have several times threatened a general lockout in order to break up the Board by defections from membership. The allied trades, however, can stand it better than the employers can, and there is little danger that this is more than a threat.

The Allied Trades Councils spend very little time in discussing or passing resolutions which have only a remote connection with the interests of labor and which are practically without effect when they are passed. The work the Councils do is directly to the point. They can therefore, more directly benefit labor than the general Central Labor Unions, which waste much valuable time in discussing questions of political action, socialism, trade union labels, legislation, apprentices, or a thousand and one other matters. Few of the questions which the Central Labor Unions discuss are ever brought into the Allied Trades Councils or the Board of Delegates meetings. These discussions are unnecessary from the point of view of the councils, for they have a very definite work to perform.

The real points of difference then between the ordinary Central Labor Union and the Allied Trades Councils are three. The first is identical with the essential element of weakness in the former, *i. e.*, the lack of a definite program consistently carried out. The Allied Trades Councils have such a program and adhere to it. It consists in the demand that wages of the men represented in the council should be increased rather than lowered, and that the number of hours

of labor should be lowered rather than increased. Thus a definite work is cut out for the organization, and any question which does not directly affect this program is ruled out. The second point of difference is that the composition of one body is thoroughly heterogeneous and the delegates are voluntary workers, while in the other the delegates have much more in common and are paid representatives. The third point of difference is that power is centralized in the Allied Trades Council, while the Central Labor Union is thoroughly democratic.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICAL ACTION AND SOCIALISM.

EVER since trade unions have existed in the United States, a favorite method of accomplishing reforms of all kinds has been through legislation. Of course the trade unionist is not alone in this, for each separate class in the community attempts to benefit itself through the enactment of laws. Hence we have all degrees of "class" legislation upon city, state, or national statute books. This desire for legislative enactment in behalf of trade unions is seen most clearly in the continued agitation for a shorter work day, from the beginning of the century when the hours of labor were virtually without limit, through the adoption of the ten-hour law to the passage of a special eight-hour law, down to the agitation for a general eight-hour law which cannot be evaded.

Hand in hand with this desire for legislative action goes the method of collective bargaining. One method is not necessarily antagonistic to the other, but often supplementary. Collective bargaining is more costly to the laborer even when it is more effective, and therefore, whenever the result can be accomplished by legislation, the tendency is to adopt that method. This method is almost wholly resorted to in Germany through the independent political action of the workingmen under the name of the Social Democratic Party. This is due partly to the fact that much less liberty of all kinds is given to the German than to the English or the American workman; the demands of the labor party in Ger-

many have almost all been granted in England and in the United States. The method of collective bargaining which prevails to such a great extent in other countries is rarely resorted to in Germany.

In England, while legislative enactment has always been a favorite method, it has grown in importance more and more during the last thirty-five years until, as Webb points out, "there exist great national trade unions in cotton and coal industries which are really political organizations whose end and aim is to procure reforms for their particular crafts through act of parliament."[1] Besides these two organizations there is in England an active political machinery which, though not as effective as it might be, still accomplishes much more than is accomplished in the United States. The "Parliamentary Committee," as noted before, must "watch all legislative measures directly affecting the question of labor, initiate such legislative action as the [Trades Union] congress may direct and prepare the program for the parliament." There is no machinery by which the Parliamentary Committee may at all times work harmoniously and effectively with the great national unions. The Trades Union Congress has, to a large extent, barred the way to mutual understanding and effective co-operation between the Committee and the other class of organizations, which are necessary to any effective political organization, by refusing admission to the congress to delegates from the Trades Councils.

As far as legislative action itself is concerned, the Trades Council is of little importance when compared to the gigantic national trade unions. In the way of suggesting and formulating legislation, little is therefore lost by this break. The importance of this side of legislation, however, depends upon the attitude assumed by organized labor toward its

[1] *Industrial Democracy*, vol. I., page 258.

own political action. If trade unionists are content to work and to vote for candidates of the old parties, depending on pledges for fulfillment of promises, the Trades Council has practically no political work to perform.

The machinery is furnished by the political parties and a trade unionist votes simply as any other citizen, for the candidate who best represents his views. When, however, as in Germany, and as is becoming more and more true in England, the trade unionist wishes to becomes an independent political factor and to nominate candidates of his own, the Trades Council becomes of the utmost value. It can now be used as the sub-committee of what corresponds to the national committee, *viz.*, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress. It is a ready-made nominating convention and an executive committee for the district. It can concentrate the efforts of the trades unions of the district upon the labor candidate and elect him. The success of this kind of action depends upon certain conditions which do not at present exist. In the first place, it is necessary to have a platform, and in the second place, the candidate, if elected to parliament, must be supported during his term of office. At present, the latter condition depends on the former. There are, at present, six members of Parliament representing trades unions. The Miners send five, and the Union of Seamen and Firemen, one.[1] These are supported out of the funds of the trade unions which they represent, and their first duty is to the special class which elected and which supports them. The platform upon which they stand is the narrow one of a particular trade union.

The Trades Council might undertake to elect a candidate or candidates, but under the prevailing sentiment in favor of low dues, it could not possibly undertake to support them.

[1] *Fabian Tract*, no. 49, page 20, note.

A very much closer city federation is necessary before this can be accomplished. This essential step will be taken when trades unions find a general platform of principles upon which all can stand, so that a labor candidate will represent trade unionism rather than a trade union. The great difficulty in England is the strength of party affiliations and the corruption of labor leaders. There can be no independent political action so long as the former exists, and no effective party action for labor so long as the latter obtains. Strict party affiliation will cease or will at least be transferred as soon as the unionist discovers that he has something real and definite to work for along labor lines, and—what is more to the point—when he discovers that he can be on the winning side and vote for a labor candidate at the same time. The very same causes will break up the system of corruption and bribery, for there will be no possibility of the labor leader delivering the labor vote to one of the old parties; as a consequence his influence will not be worth buying.

It is not our purpose to discuss what this unifying doctrine or platform will be, but simply to show the possible use of the Trades Council under such a regime. A straw, however, which seems to show which way the wind is blowing in England, is to be found in the resolution passed by the last Trades Union Congress by a vote of nearly two to one, seven hundred and eight thousand against four hundred and ten thousand:

"Inasmuch as this Congress believes that the labor problem can only be solved when the land and the means of production, distribution and exchange are made collective property, and as the opinion prevails that political action is the best method to accomplish this object, it is recommended that trade unionists render their moral and financial support to the socialist labor parties."

In the United States conditions are much the same as in

England in regard to political action. Organization in outline is the same, but there is no such general patronage or affiliation with one body as is enjoyed by the Trade Union Congress and its executive. Not only is there a national rival to the American Federation of Labor, which is through its executive somewhat analogous to the Trades Union Congress, but several great federations, which are not rivals, are not affiliated. With this difference the lines of organization are identical. With the local union as a basis both countries have the national trade unions, national trade federations, central labor unions and allied trades councils. Thus the machinery is at hand for political purposes in one country as in the other.

English trades unions, however, and more particularly federations of unions, enter actively into political affairs. It is as much a part of their work to see that the right men are elected, and that the proper legislation is enacted, as to see that labor is properly organized. That labor organizations should enter into politics, nobody seems to question. It is simply a question as to methods and platforms.

In the United States all this is different. It is still something of an open question whether trade unions should undertake political action at all, although it is becoming more and more of a struggle to keep politics out of the local, and almost impossible to prevent the central unions and the larger federations from entering the fray. If it had not been for the disastrous experiences with politics and politicians, the labor unions of the United States would stand for political action quite as much as their prototypes in England.

A writer on trades organizations gives the following as a cause of the rise of Central Labor Unions:

"The laws of all national trade organizations are strictly against permitting the discussion of subjects of a political nature. So strict was this rule, that when efforts were made by the legislatures of the

various states to pass laws making trades unions conspiracies, the unions themselves could not consider in their meetings any plans looking to the defeat of such laws. The plan adopted to get over the difficulty was to organize trades assemblies, composed of delegates from trade unions. These assemblies made their own laws and prescribed their own duties, the principal duty being to watch legislation."[1]

We saw how, in 1872, the National Labor Union was disrupted and destroyed by its action in nominating a presidential ticket. Ever since then, national federations have kept their hands off. Central Labor Unions, however, have entered the field of independent politics spasmodically, but never as a settled policy. The only exception has been in the case of a certain small class of Central Unions which have declared for socialism.

The question of political action by trade unions divides the members into three classes. The first class contains the extreme conservative element, which the socialists call the "pure and simple." They believe that trade union ends should be gained by trade union action, and that politics should not even be discussed in a trade union meeting, still more that political action should not be taken. This is a class of theorists who often succeed in having their views adopted in constitutions and by-laws, only to see them ruthlessly set aside by vote of the union or by an arbitrary decision of a president interested in political affairs, while the members speak for one party or another as they please. This party, also, has control of the American Federation of Labor, although at the convention of 1894 held in Chicago, the platform of the British Trades Union Congress was "submitted for the consideration of the labor organizations of America with the request that their delegates to the next annual convention of the American Federation of Labor be

[1] E. A. Allen, *Labor and Capital*, page 374.

instructed on this most important subject." The vote at the convention the next year stood one thousand two hundred and seventeen to nine hundred and thirteen against the proposition. The section of the platform which caused most discussion was the endorsement of the sentiment: "The collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution." The vote, therefore, must be interpreted to be not so much a refusal to endorse independent political action as a refusal to endorse such a socialistic plank. The latter action, however, necessarily carries with it the former, for it is almost needless to say that neither one of the old parties will ever be endorsed by the Federation. It is equally true that an independent political labor party which did not endorse socialism would hardly be worth bringing into the field.

The second class of trade unionists is that faction which desires that no discussions of the platform or policy of a political party should take place in the meetings, but that the body as a whole should support those candidates or that party which will pledge themselves, or at least may be deemed most favorable, to the demands of labor. This proposition is contradictory in itself, for a resolution in a Central Labor Union meeting to endorse a certain political party *because* it is most favorable to labor would at once precipitate the most violent partisan discussion. It is only the man who is pleased to call himself a "class-conscious" trade unionist who will stand back and smile at the war of words. And he is right. There is a sort of intermittent interest in the parties toward the laborer, and one is as vacillating as the other in promises and in the fulfillment of promises. However mistaken in principles and methods the socialist may be, he has the advantage over the other parties in the appeal for the labor vote, because he at least is consistent in theory, and, as far as he has an opportunity, in practice also.

The great argument of this class of trade unionists is that the laboring class may hold the balance of power between the parties and thereby obtain all that can be done by legislation. If this contention is true, it can be carried out only by accepting pledges from candidates and political parties and trusting to their honor and hope of a return to power, to fulfill the pledges made. It is entirely unnecessary to call attention to the almost innumerable cases where the candidate or party has remembered the pledges only as a means of victory at the polls.

This has become so common, so much a matter of course, that by the time a new election comes the voters are ready to believe in a new set of pledges from the same candidates or parties. If, however, the trade unionists could stand as a unit, the candidates and parties would find it to their advantage not only to make pledges, but to keep them. It would be something of an ideal condition, in which the trade union element could put either party in power, according as its wishes were carried out. But this presupposes an intelligence and a stability hardly found in any class of voters, much less in that of the trade unionist, whose opportunities for information and for education in general have been prescribed by the narrow limits of his craft. More than this, if the trade unionists were able to stand as a unit they might better undertake independent political action and run the risk of electing a sufficient number of legislators to carry out their own program.

This second class is the one which really dominates the trade unions at present, although the first class does so theoretically. Whatever of political agitation and work is accomplished in Central Labor Unions is along these lines and in two ways: First, before the election, lists of questions relating to legislation in which laboring men are vitally interested, are sent to the different candidates, and the candidates

are supposed to answer them. These replies will show which candidates are more favorable to organized labor and therefore worthy of support. Silence is, of course, considered a negative reply. The following, the work of the Baltimore Federation of Labor, serve as good examples:

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE FEDERATION OF LABOR.
BALTIMORE, MD., *October* —, 1896.

MR. ——— ———

Candidate for First Branch, City Council:

Dear Sir: Please signify your approval or disapproval of questions asked by filling out the accompanying circular and return same not later than October 25th.

1. Do you favor organized labor?

2. Do you favor all work done by the city (where practical) being performed by day laborers?

3. Do you favor the abolition of any labor performed in the city jail that comes in conflict with honest labor?

4. Do you favor inserting in any contract, where contract labor is necessary, a clause forbidding the sub-contracting of same in whole or in part—unless to the sub-contractors named in the original contractor's bid when opened?

Yours respectfully, SECRETARY.

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE FEDERATION OF LABOR.
BALTIMORE, MD., *October* 26, 1895.

Please signify your approval or disapproval of the questions asked in the accompanying circular by filling out the following and returning same not later than the date already stated:

1. I ——— in favor of free school books.

2. I ——— in favor of compulsory education of all children under fourteen years of age.

3. I ——— in favor of day labor as against contract labor, and ——— in favor of all city and state work being done by day labor.

4. I ——— believe in the employment of Union men on all City and State work.

5. I ——— approve the appropriation of any money to penal institutions where work is performed that comes in contact with honest labor.

6. I ——— refuse to approve any charter of any corporation that will not guarantee to employ Union Labor.

7. I ——— in favor of reassessment as offered by State Senator Thomas G. Hayes.

——— ———

Candidate for ———————

The second method of determining what candidates should be supported by laboring men is more certain, for it does not lead the voter to depend on promises or pledges. This is an opportunity to see clearly what kind of record the man has made as a legislator. This is naturally possible only when he has served at least one term, and comes up for reëlection. The State Federation or State Branch of the American Federation of Labor, less frequently the Central Labor Union, publishes a complete list of the legislators, together with their record or votes on bills in which organized labor is particularly interested. For example, the Workingmen's Federation of the State of New York published in 1898 a list of bills which it had endorsed, and whose passage it had attempted to secure. A record of the vote on these bills was kept and the legislators were classified according to their votes, into five classes: 1. Special Roll of Honor; 2. Roll of Honor; 3. Favorable mention; 4. Lukewarm; 5. Blacklist. These circulars were sent to trade unions throughout the State, and furnished a self-made record for each legislator, whereby the voting trade unionist might judge of his probable action in the future in regard to proposed labor legislation. This publication, to be of value, must be compiled without any suspicion of politi-

cal bias; for it would otherwise not only furnish no true basis of judgment, but work positive injustice.

The influence which such attempts exert on the vote of an average trade unionist is rather doubtful. Generally he is not different from other men, and the partisan spirit is stronger than his loyalty to trade union principle. Thus, the legislator whose name appears on the "Blacklist" is too often returned to his seat in the legislature, ready to defy organized labor and to vote against its interests.

The program of this class of trade unionists who want organized labor to hold the balance of power, lends itself readily to one of the most baneful influences in American politics. The labor leader to-day who is at all active in politics, must be a remarkably careful and honest man if he escapes the charge of selling out to the "boss." The time has come when a man cannot be a trusted labor leader and a politician at the same time. If, however, the leaders of the parties were not so ignorant of trade unions, the occupation of the labor leader who is a politician for "what there is in it" would be gone. There is no class of men so critical in their judgments of each other, or so reckless and free in bringing charges against each other in the union meetings, as the trade unionists. Moreover, organized labor is too intelligent and democratic for the leader to deliver the votes as per contract, while the Australian ballot has made proof of the fulfillment of the contract impossible.

As long as organized labor holds to the principle of political action in connection with the existing parties, there is a chance that its demands and petitions will be heard. Under any other system of trade union politics, the union men must fight for a place by the side of the older parties, but can expect no help from them in passing strictly labor bills.

This brings us to the third class of trade unionists,—those who believe in strictly independent political action.

What is said in regard to political action, applies for the most part to the Central Labor Unions; for this body and the National Federations are the only organizations which ever have taken such action. It is not likely that national trade unions whose foundations and policy are benefits, insurance, and social recreation will ever attempt to elect candidates of their own choice. The Central Labor Union, having no such functions, may undertake to unite the interests of the trade unionists of the city in such a way that they may elect their own candidates on their own platform. As it is formed here on the same lines as in England, all that was said of the English Trades Council will apply to the Central Labor Union of the United States.

The latter organization, however, has an immense advantage over the former in the fact that its candidate, if elected, need not be supported, nor is he under the necessity of supporting himself. This, however, is two edged; for while the labor organization is relieved of an almost insurmountable difficulty, there is still trouble on account of the number of candidates and consequent factions. In other words, the Labor Union takes upon itself all the troubles of a political organization which has spoils to offer when victory has been won.

This third group of trade unionists is the one to which has been applied the term "class-conscious." They are distinguished from the other groups principally by the fact that they have no faith that present conditions can be much altered for the better through the efforts of trade union organization alone. They insist that the laborers constitute a distinct class, and as such they must work out their own salvation through political organization, using the trade union only as a step in the final emancipation from the present industrial system. Trade Unions are good as far as they go, but it is impossible for them to accomplish the result aimed at.

This result is the abolition of the wage system and its replacement by "the collective ownership by the people of all the means of production and distribution." This is the essential plank in the platform of that class which wishes to see trade unions enter politics as an independent party. It means then nothing more nor less than that there is a strong minority of trade unionists who are socialists.

The following letter, written by the recently elected Socialist Mayor of Haverhill, Massachusetts, sets forth clearly the real difference between a "pure and simple" trade unionist and a "class-conscious" socialist.

CITY OF HAVERHILL, EXECUTIVE DEPT.,
CITY HALL, *Jan.* 17, 1899.

JOHN J. PALLAS, *Sec'y C. L. U., N. Y. City.*

Your kind letter extending to me the commendation of the C. L. U. of N. Y. City, gave me much pleasure. My words uttered in labor's cause were but the words that every socialist who understands the historic struggle of labor to emancipate itself, would have uttered. I recognize the fact that the Trade Union movement is one of the factors in the grand process of evolution that must go on until we reach the goal for which we are all striving (industrial as well as political equality). The Trades Unions play their part in the universal drama, but *only* their *part.* It is incomplete without the political movement. I can see but one end for which to strive, and that is a co-operative commonwealth, where society in its collectivity will organize its machinery of production and allow every man the privilege to apply his labor power whenever he desires, and that the product of his labor shall belong to him and that no man shall take it from him. Every man has the right to work, and the product of labor belongs to those who create it. Under private ownership of the machinery by which this labor is performed, labor is robbed of a large portion of such product, and will continue to be robbed until such time when the machinery is owned by all and operated for the benefit of all. As I have said, the trade-union plays its part, but it is not able to accomplish this end on the old lines; they must demand the full product of their labor with their ballots

as well, for by this method they will array all of their force against injustice. In conclusion let me say that any Socialist party that does not recognize the part that Trade Unions play, does not deserve support. On the other hand, any Trade Union that will not support the Socialist Party that does recognize this part, should not complain of their condition.

Let us then work hand in hand, each doing its part for the establishment of economic equality, and the coöperative commonwealth will come.

Yours for humanity,

J. C. CHASE,
Mayor of Haverhill.

A Socialist is generally a man who has done more or less thinking for himself and arrived at certain definite conclusions. These conclusions he is apt to force on people whenever he gets a chance. On this account he often becomes prominent and secures his election to the Central Labor Union where he has a somewhat larger field for his socialistic activities. Through the efforts of such men, many of whom are quite properly leaders, a few Central Labor Unions have endorsed the plan of independent action in politics which, as noted above, carries with it a socialistic platform. No Central Labor Union, so far as is known, has worked actively in connection with the Socialist Labor Party which represents the political side of socialism in the United States. Several have, however, gone the full length and accepted its platform.

The most notable example of independent political action on the part of a Central Labor Union occurred in 1886, when the New York central body circulated a petition asking Mr. Henry George to be an independent candidate for mayor and secured more than thirty thousand signatures. Mr. George was then nominated by the Central Labor Union, and sixty-eight thousand votes were counted for him. New York trade unionists insist that he was elected but was

counted out. For this campaign the name of "United Labor Party" was adopted, and the party was organized by the Central Labor Union in every district in the city; a campaign committee was established and all the machinery of a political party was created. This movement was spasmodic, and depended for its phenomenal success more on the character and the reputation of the candidate, than upon the platform or the work of the Union.

The question of independent political action is the great problem before the trade unionist to-day. There is practical unanimity on questions of organization, strikes, boycotts, shorter working day, and all those controversies which directly affect capital and labor. But this question remains totally unsettled.

CHAPTER V.

THE FUTURE OF CENTRAL LABOR UNIONS.

WHAT was said in the last chapter leads directly to the question, what is to be the future of the Central Labor Union? From the beginning to the present, the real end of all its work has been to place labor on something of an equal footing with capital in the matter of bargaining. This is true, not alone of the central bodies, but as far as aggressive work is concerned, it is the mainspring of all action in the case of large and small trade unions alike.

Even the subject of insurance, which takes up a large part of the time of the great national trade unions, and the matter of influencing legislation, with which the federations concern themselves, have this object in view, *viz.*, To put the laborer in a position where he may bargain for the sale of his labor with a combination of capital which is no stronger than the combination of labor which he represents.

The former, or what Webb calls the "method of mutual insurance," does not touch the question of competition by those men outside the unions, but is simply a method of evening up the wages of different men in the unions. If individual bargaining were the rule in all unions, certain men who by reason of a large family or other necessities would be forced to accept a lower wage, would then help to support those who are out of work because they would not accept the same rate. The non-union man, however, assumes none of the burdens and shares none of the advantages. All this naturally helps to put the trade unionist in a posi-

tion of greater independence and thus assists his organization in bargaining with the employer.

In the same way the "method of legal enactment," which keeps the workman in better health as a result of sanitary inspection and of laws regulating employers' liability for accident, and which relieves the unions to a certain extent from responsibility in regard to the labor of women and children, leaves them in a much better position to insist on bargains with employers which will not be so one-sided as individual bargains tend to be.

What are the evidences that the Central Labor Unions will continue in this direction? For we must first find these before we can determine what will be the probable line of development.

In the first place, the work of organization is gradually progressing, locals are becoming more numerous and the central bodies are becoming stronger in membership as well as increasing in number.[1] There are more real trade unionists in the United States to-day than ever before. As a method of collective bargaining is useless and foredoomed to failure unless a respectable percentage of the members of a particular craft belongs in the organization, the growth in numbers among trade unionists is encouraging. Since about 1886 it has very seldom happened that a central labor body has lapsed after having once really started, and almost every such union is stronger now than it has ever been.

A movement toward a closer centralization of trades is beginning to manifest itself. It first appeared in the trade sections of the Central Unions. There were soon formed special city federations called Allied Trades Councils. The cause of this centralization is to be found in the struggle for a better basis for collective bargaining. No part of the trade union organization is so well fitted to uphold this essen-

[1] See above, chapter ii, page 40.

tial principle as these councils composed of delegates of the allied trades. These are also increasing in number and efficiency, and are even forming national federations of trades councils.[1]

Complete organization and a further development of this form of federation will go far toward putting labor unions on an equal footing with employers or with combinations of employers when it comes to the question of buying and selling labor. Even now, as we have noticed before, the Board of Walking Delegates of the Building Trades of New York City has placed the building trades of that city in a position where they do not fear any combination of employers. They can make bargains now which are not favorable to one side only.

The building trades have been the pioneers in this movement, but have been closely followed by the printing trades. There is no particular reason why other trades which are more or less closely allied should not follow the examples thus set. The iron and metal trades and the textile trades, especially in certain cities, should lend themselves particularly well to such combinations. The beginning of these may also be seen in trade sections of some of the larger central unions.

Centralization of trade unions is also shown in the election of a salaried agent by the Central Union. Up to a very short time ago all the business of the Union was done either by a committee or by the whole body, and, in all but one Central Union, this is still the case. The experiment of a paid business agent, however, has been such a splendid success in the Cleveland Union that without doubt other centrals will follow its example. The members of this union are very enthusiastic over this plan, saying that "a business agent can earn his salary twice over every week for every

[1] The National Building Trades, formed in 1898, has now two national, one local and eleven building trades councils affiliated.

Central Labor Union large enough to employ him." In the words of the only man who occupies such a position in the United States, "a business agent must be lawyer, doctor, arbitrator, dictator, leader, and driver for the Union. He must have an ear and eye to all things, keep his own counsel and other people's secrets." In other words, this Union is so centralized that the one man does all the real business, while the Union itself dictates the policy and passes resolutions.

Here we would have conditions ripe for collective bargaining if in addition there were somewhat stronger ties binding the locals to the central body. The central, however, is composed of such diverse elements that a stronger bond is scarcely possible. The Local, the National Trade Union, the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, the Allied Trades Council, and in some cases the Socialist Labor Party all have some sort of a claim on the delegates, and some of them often have a claim prior to that of the Central Labor Union.

The acme of efficiency for the purpose of collective bargaining is to be found in a combination of the Allied Trades Council and the salaried business agent, and this is what is really to be found in the Board of Walking Delegates of New York City. When the Central Labor Union has reached the point where the delegates put the common business into the hands of a trusted paid agent, and are bound together as closely as their allegiance to their own autonomous unions will permit, it has gone about as far as possible on the road to collective bargaining.

The importance of this method of securing the aims of labor organizations is second to none in the whole range of trade union activity. It is the very last right that employers will concede, and it is conceded only when compulsion is used. It can never be just that an employer, representing

as he does a great accumulation of capital, should insist on making bargains with each individual laborer. The latter is necessarily at a disadvantage from the very fact that the co-ordinate factor of production, capital, is represented as a whole, while of the other factor, labor, he is only a part. Labor must combine, and in all bargains for the sale of the common commodity it must be represented by one who has authority to act for it. The most equitable rule is that the labor representative should bargain with the representative of so much capital as is used in the employment of the laborers represented. This is the very essence and life of trade union organization, and can be abandoned only when the trade unionist is ready to forsake trade unionism itself.

As has been stated above, the Central Labor Unions are not organized on a plan which will enable them to do this. At best, they are only loose federations with no really binding laws to hold them together. The sole penalty attaching to a failure of a local to abide by the decision of the majority in the Central is that it loses its standing in the federation, as well as its advantages. The business agent, or the body itself, cannot force any local to abide by a decision or contract. There is thus little use in making a mere declaration to this effect. In fact, as employers understand this quite as well as the trade unionist, it is impossible for a general Central Labor Union to do any collective bargaining. Unless a radical change should take place in the organization of Central bodies, there is little hope that they will be able directly to undertake this most fundamental function of trade unionism. Autonomous locals through their National Trade Unions use this method of collective bargaining continually.[1] Indirectly, in organizing and helping to keep

[1] A notable example of this is the contract which the Chicago Typographical Union entered into in 1897 with the Chicago Daily Newspaper Association.

alive such locals, the Central Unions can do, and are doing, a great deal to further the idea of collective bargaining.

One very potent reason why not only Central Unions, but all labor organizations cannot do more in this direction is that they are not incorporated, and hence cannot be forced to keep their contracts, nor force their members to do so. There is probably not one trade unionist in a hundred, who thinks about this matter, that is in favor of incorporating the Unions. The reasons are very apparent. Legal action could then be taken against the Union for a breach of any contract, and the Union could enforce its rules on its own members, a thing which it is impossible at present to do. Trade unionists in general are not willing to give up their immunity for the sake of the probability of driving a better bargain with the employers. In addition, as long as trade unions in the United States uphold the principle of collective bargaining, the Central Labor Union will be only a secondary and auxiliary body, and can assist in the work only through organization, agitation, and such legislation as it may be able to bring about through the political influence it can exert on legislators.

The movement for what is called in England "The New Unionism" has taken hold of the Central bodies in the United States to a greater extent than it has of any other labor organization, with the exception of those which are primarily socialistic and only incidentally labor bodies. This is due partly to the fact that socialistic tendencies are growing among all except the wealthy classes; but it is perhaps more largely to be explained by the fact that the machinery of Trade Unions in cities is particularly well fitted to organize and to carry on the work of a political party. Many trade unionists can discern more to be gained by adopting a "method of legal enactment" rather than a system of collective bargaining.

Let the trade unionists of a city be convinced that their ends can be more effectively advanced by independent political organization, and nothing could suit the purpose better than the system of local unions throughout the city, responsible as they soon would be to the central executive committee, for this is the form which the Central Labor Union would assume. Should Central Labor Unions or labor unions generally take upon themselves the functions of independent political parties, they must necessarily stand or fall, as other political parties do, by their platform and according to the voters whom they can persuade to vote for it. They could have no hold whatever upon other parties to influence legislation. This is one great obstacle to an open declaration for socialism and for an independent socialistic party. The conservative leaders of to-day, seeing no immediate advantage to be gained by giving up the hold which the trade unionists have upon the old parties, stand firmly against all efforts of the "class-conscious" party to force the whole trade union movement into an independent political organization. It is only a question of time, however, when this party will dominate and when trade-unionism in the United States will be upon a socialistic basis. It is not our purpose to enter upon this subject, except so far as it is indicated by men and measures in Central Labor Unions. But the considerations just advanced show that here, to a greater extent than in any other trade union bodies (except the local unions, which are too small and too much bound by the environments of a particular craft to be of much value as indicating tendencies) is to be found an index of the drift of trade union sentiment. The Central Labor Union is more of a popular body than the national union, and what it does is not so carefully studied out in reference to all possible effects on different classes and parties. Moreover, unlike the similar bodies in England, the national leaders

either are at present, or have been, intimately connected with the City Central and have aided in the formation of the official utterances, while on the other hand they have been more or less influenced by what they have found in these bodies.

There are very few, if any, constitutions of Central Labor Unions in the United States which do not contain declarations in the preambles or planks in the platform of a decidedly socialistic character; three, at least, go so far as to declare for the "collective ownership by the people of all the means of production and distribution," which is of course the essence of socialistic doctrine. As an evidence of the progress which the socialists are making, we may notice the prominence which was given to the discussion of the socialistic resolutions at the 1898 convention of the American Federation of Labor at Kansas City. It is true that the resolutions were voted down by the decisive vote of about eighteen hundred to five hundred, yet for the first time in the history of these conventions there was real debate on the merits of the question; and this gives the socialist faction hope. That a great majority of trade unionists in the United States are to-day opposed to state socialism is undoubtedly true; but it is no less true that the signs of the times point toward independent political action by trade unionists, and we have shown above that such action must necessarily be upon a socialistic basis. Nothing, however, would be further from the truth than that, in spite of the tendencies noted above, there is any danger to be feared from the socialistic action of trade unions for a long time to come, if ever. It will be necessary to overcome first a party allegiance stronger than in any other country of the world; and second, an aversion to socialism which dominates most of the intelligent American workingmen. The great strength of the socialists lies in the number of foreign-born members of trade unions who have developed no love for party or for American institutions.

There is nothing incompatible in the two ideas which share the field of Trade Union sentiment and activity, *viz.:* the method of collective bargaining and the method of legal enactment brought about by independent political action. The two will go hand in hand, one for the practical present, and the other worked for as an ideal for the future.

There are certain well-defined dangers and faults peculiar to Central Labor Unions, which, minimized or eradicated, would increase the value of the work many-fold. Their officers would become more efficient, the public would repose more confidence in them and legislators would treat their petitions and resolutions with greater consideration. These dangers are two-fold: First, those which can be controlled from the inside, those with which members themselves have to do. Second, those which originate without the union and which can be overcome only by the combined strength of the whole body.

In the former class should be placed first of all that personal envy and jealousy which are sure to be found in any organization that has places of honor and of trust to be filled. A man is found in the union with a little more intelligence or a little more executive ability than others, and it is but natural and proper that there should be assigned to him the work for which he is especially fitted. If there be honor connected with it, so much the better for him, and so much the better for the whole body; for without it he probably could not be induced to undertake the work at all. But no sooner is he raised to this position than some member conceives the idea that he himself, or some friend of his, could do the work better, and immediately begins to create discord. Friction is thus increased, even if he is not successful in displacing the object of his envy. Referring to this matter, a lay member of a strong central union, himself a keen observer, writes: "Jealousy, or a desire to pull a

man down as soon as he seems to be getting a little higher than the common herd, is one of the things which prevents the Central Union from doing better work." A struggle for some petty office will take up the time and attention of the whole Union for hours, to the utter disregard of important matters of business, while charges of all kinds are bandied back and forth from one faction to another, the result being of no real benefit to anybody.

Second, there is a general lack of confidence in the officers and leaders selected. This lack of confidence is a natural result of the experience of labor unions. Too many men have abused the trust placed in them, tempted by the opportunity for embezzlement, and by offers from employers or political parties. Too great care cannot be taken by those who have in charge funds belonging to labor unions; for charges of dishonesty are often recklessly made, and the least mistake is magnified into a mountain by an envious rival. A remedy is attempted in the shape of large committees and supervising boards. This is at best clumsy machinery, and is not capable of accomplishing the best results. The fact is that almost every officer of a Central Labor Union as soon as he is elected becomes an object of suspicion and distrust. Much of his time is necessarily expended in combating this feeling, and the men best fitted to lead often resign merely because they have not the confidence of their fellows.

Make constitutions and by-laws as you will, place as many checks and balances as possible in the government of a body, it will still be necessary or expedient to place arbitrary power or authority in a small committee or in a single individual. In order that the best results may be obtained, this committee or this individual should be made to feel that he has an undivided constituency at his back. This is one reason why the agents of corporations are so powerful and attain so often the ends sought. They know that what they

do will be approved, or at least that it will not be undone at once by those for whom they act.

Third, the Central Labor Union has no definite policy in regard to questions which it may discuss, except the very general idea that "everything concerning labor" has a place in its deliberations. This term and this conception are so large that there is nothing in art, literature, science, or politics which would not be a proper subject for discussion and resolution. As a matter of fact the topics discussed are taken from a field not much narrower. Naturally enough, the public and the legislators to whom the resolutions are addressed can hardly see the connection between a labor organization and many of the subjects of petitions and resolutions which they receive. There is field for reform sufficiently large if the union never went outside of its own peculiar territory. In undertaking a variety of burdens the energies of the organization are dissipated, and its influence with those whose good will it needs is weakened. The time for discussion of legitimate questions is all too short at most, and when it is wasted by factious quarreling, the opportunity for doing the necessary things is lost. What is true of all popular bodies is especially true of this one. Its action is impulsive and spasmodic. Whatever appeals to the delegates at the time is acted upon, and in many cases is at once forgotten. Promises are forced from candidates or public officials, and it is often not known whether the promises have been kept or not. As has been shown before, resolutions of successive meetings may be exactly opposite in sentiment, and are passed in utter forgetfulness of what was done in the preceding session. A little more consistency and definiteness of aim will lend much to the dignity and weight of the conclusions.

Of one of the dangers which threaten the Union from outside we have already spoken. On the whole, trade unions

are sufficiently on their guard against it. That is, the danger from men who are party politicians first, and trade unionists only "for what there is in it" for themselves. In the present state of party allegiance on the part of trade unionists, a discussion of party politics, if persisted in, will wreck the strongest union.

The second danger is that the union will, in its enthusiasm to right real wrongs, perform acts which will make it amenable to courts of law. The laws against conspiracy have been invoked over and over again on the part of the employers, and in the United States the acts of labor organizations still come under these laws, although in England they do not. It is wiser to recognize the fact that certain acts constitute conspiracy, and to refrain from committing the acts, rather than to suffer the penalty and to inveigh against the unjust laws. There is no reason why, with the right kind of work and with a judicious use of the ballot, labor organizations may not to a certain extent be rendered exempt from the operation of the laws against conspiracy to injure trade.

The same advice might be given in regard to what has been termed "government by injunction," or decrees of courts of equity, which have caused so much trouble for labor organizations. If the power of these courts is as dangerous as the labor leaders would have us believe, even that might be curtailed by a combined effort of unionists and of others whom they may be able to persuade to work in harmony with them. Thanks to our democratic institutions, there is little that cannot be done if it is desired by a majority large enough.

VITA

THE author of this dissertation was born in Cleveland, Ohio, August 31, 1870.

At the age of eighteen, he entered Oberlin Academy, where he spent the next four years. In 1892, he entered Oberlin College, and graduated from the classical course of that institution in 1896, receiving the degree of A. B. During the year 1896–7, he pursued the study of Political Economy and Finance, under the direction of Dr. T. N. Carver, and History under the direction of Prof. Lyman B. Hall. In 1897, he received the degree of Master of Arts from Oberlin College, and was appointed a University Fellow in Political Economy and Finance at Columbia University. Here he attended all the courses in these subjects and many of those in Sociology, Statistics and American History.

During 1898–9, he was an honorary Fellow in Columbia University.

He is the author of an article on "Gold Reserve and Bond Issue", published in "Sound Currency," and of one on "New England State Banks," which is about to be published in the same series.